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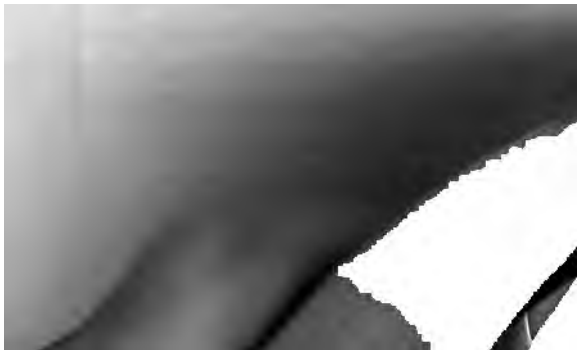
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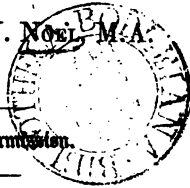
WONDERFUL—COUNSELLER—THE MIGHTY
GOD—THE EVERLASTING FATHER—
THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

Five Sermons on Isaiah, ix. 6.

BY THE

HON. AND REV. B. W. NOEL, M.A.

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**FLEET STREET,
December 1847.**

MESSIAH, THE WONDERFUL.

“FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN, UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN: AND THE GOVERNMENT SHALL BE UPON HIS SHOULDER: AND HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED WONDERFUL, COUNSELLER, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE.”—*Isaiah*, ix. 6.

THE first word intimates to us that the predicted fact in this verse is the cause of the predicted facts which are recorded in the preceding verses. It is because the “Child is born,” spoken of here, that Galilee has seen a great light, that the redeemed nation has been multiplied, their joy become like the joy of many harvests, that the redeemed nation is delivered from oppression, and that war finally ceases on the earth. All these are found connected with this verse as effects with cause; after they are described, it is added,

“*For* unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given : and the government shall be upon His shoulder : and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” He must be a glorious Person, of whose advent in our world such things could be declared, and it would of course be very unlikely that they should be said of any earthly prince. But those who have been unwilling to recognise the Messiah, the Saviour, in this and other remarkable passages of the Old Testament, have sought to divert this text from its proper application, and pretend to interpret it of Hezekiah, whom they suppose to be the child that was born, upon whose shoulder the government was to be placed, and whose name was thus called. But not to speak of the fact that Hezekiah had passed his early childhood when this was written  Isaiah, how could it be said of Heze-

kiah, that “ of the increase of his government and peace there should be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth even for ever?” Since he reigned but over two tribes, and for twenty-nine years only, how is it possible that we should speak of his government as having an increase without end, and how could these names be given to a prince like Hezekiah—“ his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace?” To avoid this latter difficulty at least, the enemies of Christianity have given a new version to this passage. They would translate it thus :—“ The Wonderful, The Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, shall call His name the Prince of Peace.” Now this version is a manifest perversion, and no interpretation at all. It is inconsistent with the use of the Hebrew

language, as learned men have abundantly shown, and as it is constantly understood. Besides, without entering on more learned reasons why this passage could not be so translated, what reason can be assigned why the person to be named, respecting whose names the whole passage is recorded, should have but one name given him, and the person naming him should have so many? For what purpose, if it were God the Father who named the child born, "The Prince of Peace," for what purpose were all those names spoken of—"The Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father?" They would absolutely have no force when describing the person naming instead of the person named. And if so many names may be given to God as naming this child, why should these be selected? They seem to have no peculiar application. Why should God, who named the Messiah, be termed the Counsellor?

There is no force in the appellation. Hence we may conclude assuredly, that these terms belong to the "Child" here named, and that He was called "Wonderful, Counseller, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." And though the verb has an active form, yet two passages out of very many may be mentioned, to show, that it is frequently used exactly as in this passage. It is said in the fifth chapter of Joshua, at the tenth verse, "Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day;" and in the seventeenth verse of the first chapter of the Book of Judges, the same word, in the same form, is used: "And the name of the city was called Hormah." So that even some of the enemies of Christianity have not hesitated to admit that this is the proper form of the translation: "And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counseller, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

But then, while it is admitted that these names belong to the child who was to be born, some have endeavoured to show that these names were not descriptive, so that they still might belong to Hezekiah, or any other man—that they were merely names that should be given to him, not that they described the reality. “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,” but it is said, Elihu—“my God himself,” and Elijah—“my God Jehovah,” do not prove that the persons bearing those names had any of the attributes there expressed. But now observe, how exceedingly different these words are. They do not seem to indicate that Elihu was God himself, or that Elijah was God Jehovah—they only express that Jehovah was God; and thus the analogy based on these names entirely fails. We know that constantly the names of the Israelites were descriptive. I need not remind you of Abraham, Israel, Solomon,

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and many others, names descriptive, and given because of that description. There are many such names given to the church of Christ in the same way; and to the enemies of the church of Christ. But I would remind you simply of two passages, in which the names of God are thus manifestly descriptive, because one of them has a considerable likeness at least to the passage before us. In the third chapter of the Book of Exodus, we read that when Moses asked the name of God, God said unto Moses, "I AM that I am; thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you"—where it is obvious that the name is descriptive of the reality. And again, in the thirty-fourth chapter of Exodus we read, that the Lord proclaimed to Moses His name. His name was this, "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." His

name therefore is descriptive of His attributes, and it is to be understood in no other sense. We must remember, in like manner, that the names of the Messiah were undeniably descriptive, in several instances. He was to be named Shiloh, because He was to be peaceable; He was to be called Jesus—expressly because it was descriptive—“Thou shalt call His name Jesus, *for* He shall save His people from their sins.” So that the analogy of the rest of the Scriptures would lead us to think that the names here used were meant to be descriptive of the child to be born—“His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” And this may be said to be certain, because the prediction must receive its accomplishment. How has it ever received its accomplishment, or how can it, unless these names were descriptive? Neither Hezekiah nor any other person has ever received these

names ; nor did Jesus ever receive these names so as to be familiarly termed by them ; and unless He received them in this way that they described the reality, neither He nor any other person has received them, nor will receive them, and the prediction has failed. “ His name shall be called Wonderful, Counseller, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,” because He should be what those names described. It would therefore appear that they could not belong to Hezekiah—he could not be all this ; and it is apparent that as they belong to Jesus, to the Messiah Christ, so they are descriptive of what He should be. As we know from this and other passages that Jesus is Christ, therefore these names describe what Jesus is. “ He is Wonderful, Counseller, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

Let us now consider them, and view in

this passage, first, the nature of Jesus ; secondly, the government given to Him ; and, thirdly, His declared attributes.

His nature is described here, first, as being strictly human. “ Unto us a Child is born.”

The Messiah was not to descend into this world as an angel from his place in glory to dispense His favours, or communicate instruction upon earth, but He was to be born as a child. “ Unto us a Child is born.” When Jesus came He fulfilled that prediction. He entered into our world in our nature ; He experienced our infirmities ; He was susceptible of fatigue ; He required food and rest as we do ; He was liable to pain and sorrow and death as we are—in all things manifesting Himself to have our nature, with the exception of sin. But if He was born as a child into this world, He was likewise in the prediction declared

to be given unto us as "A Son." He was the Son of Mary; but this prediction intimated He should be the Son of God. I do not mean that we could argue it from this passage alone, because it might be limited to His sonship to His virgin mother; but when we compare it with the language of the New Testament, we see that it did mean to indicate, that He should be given to us as the Son of God. This is frequently insisted on as the peculiarity of this gift in the New Testament. "God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son." "He that spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and gave His Son to die for us." This is God's "unspeakable gift,"—that he who should be born into the world as a human child, should likewise enter it as the only begotten and eternal Son of God. Thus combining in His own

Person the twofold nature, Divine and human, He was qualified to work out our redemption. It was said in this prophecy He should be given "to us." "Unto us" a Child is born, "unto us" a Son is given. He came for our salvation and for our happiness. He came to live for us and to die for us; and thus was wholly given to us for our welfare—to live, to die, to rise, to reign for us, continually seeking our welfare, and securing the happiness of those who should believe in Him.

Secondly, it is said of Him, who was thus to be born into this world, and yet to have a Divine nature, that "the government should be upon his shoulder." The government of his redeemed nation; but besides that, and for its sake, the government of the whole world—the government of the universe should be upon His shoulder.

Thirdly, it is said of Him that His attributes shall be these—that He shall be

“ Wonderful, Counseller, The mighty God,
The everlasting Father, The Prince of
Peace.”


Let us now limit our thoughts to the
first,

“ HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED WONDERFUL.”

In every aspect, in every view we can take of the Redeemer, He is so “ Wonderful ” as to pass all knowledge—so “ Wonderful ” that he will justly be the object of our adoration and wonder to all eternity. We shall never by searching find Him out completely. He shall be the theme of our praise, the object of our adoration for ever and ever.

He is “ Wonderful,” because of those names that are afterwards given to Him. He must be “ Wonderful,” who is “ Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Some who

would rob Him of His glory, here again strive to enfeeble the force of the appellation, and say, by this term "Wonderful" is meant only that He should be a distinguished, an extraordinary person, a hero, a genius, a great king or conqueror—in this sense He should be "Wonderful," as distinguished from other men. But let me observe, in the first place, that the word does not merely express distinguished and extraordinary, but marvellous, "Wonderful." That is the true, proper word—"He shall be called Wonderful." It is not the custom of Scripture to give such high-sounding names to mere men. There is no instance of it, but on the contrary, it speaks of all, the highest as well as the lowest, as being merely like the flower of the grass. The Scripture speaks of the judges of the earth, the greatest of its names, as being vanity. It tells us, that before God all nations are vanity, less than nothing; and



never gives to man in his fallen state, with faculties so limited, and corruption so huge, such a name as "Wonderful." This word is never throughout Scripture given to any man; no mere man whatever is called "Wonderful." It is given constantly to God's works, never to man's. God is said to work wonders, and then this word is used of the wonders that are ascribed to Him, which are said to be distinctly and exclusively His prerogative—"Who alone doeth wondrous things." When, therefore, it is applied to the child that was to be born, it intimates to us that He was more than man. "Wonderful" indeed in nature, as well as in all other views we can take of His course, His character, His works, His attributes and position.

He was to be called "Wonderful"—marvellous—in nature; because combining all the glory of a Divine nature with all the infirmities of our fallen human nature.

and therefore beyond all comprehension by us now. Perhaps that union will be beyond our comprehension for ever, calling on us in silence to adore One, whose human infirmities His life clearly proved to us, and whose Divine majesty and glory were no less certainly displayed. Perhaps He may unfold that union to us more, but when we see as distinctly as we can now indeed undeceivably this great truth, it only calls upon us to adore, but does not inflict one moment's doubt on our spirits. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory;" proving that He was Deity by His acts and by His attributes, and yet no less manifesting that He had become "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh." "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." And therefore this being the great wonder—it

being in respect of this twofold nature chiefly that our Redeemer is here termed "Wonderful," wonders innumerable, flowing from this, surround and dazzle us on all sides. Every aspect of this glorious Person is full of wonder. He is "Wonderful" by reason of the course He pursued: predicted ever since the fall of man, in the fulness of time He descended from heaven, came forth from the Father, in the world was born by the power of the Holy Ghost, who at His baptism descended upon Him in the form of a dove—during His ministry was transfigured, so as to assume the brightness of the sun; when He died it was only to rise again according to His frequent predictions, and then before numbers to ascend to His glorious reward and throne.

He is "Wonderful" no less in the works which He accomplished during His course on earth. "Wonderful," because He could make the elements tributary to His glory,

could hush the tempest, could walk on the waves. "Wonderful," because He could banish disease by a word or by a touch. "Wonderful," because when the spirits had left this earth and were separate from their bodies, He could summon them back again to reinhabit those bodies. "Wonderful," because at His word devils yielded up their victims, delivered for ever from their sway. "Wonderful," by all those actions surpassing human power, wrought by none others except those to whom He had communicated power and authority to do so. He was "Wonderful" in those works which terminated in the redemption of lost souls: "Wonderful," because He could people heaven with rejoicing spirits, who, but for Him, would have been amongst the devils doomed: "Wonderful," because He could effect the salvation of the lost, the guilty, the helpless: "Wonderful," because He thus opened heaven to those who had been

excluded for ever from it, receiving them successively to His own glorious presence.

Jesus Christ is no less "Wonderful" from the offices He came to fulfil for man, combining in Himself numerous offices, any one of which would confer transcendent honour on its possessor. He came as the one great Prophet of His church, communicating the will of God to man by revelation; He came to be our great High Priest—but unlike those who were His predecessors and His types, Himself the sacrifice, with His blood, He carried it not into the typical holy of holies, but into the real holy of holies, to accomplish our peace with God—our Priest; and also our King, the Lord of angels and the Lord of men, to rule over such empire as no prince ever aspired to govern, not only for its extent and duration, but because He was enthroned in human consciences and hearts. The Shepherd of His people, He was to watch over

His feeble flock till He conducted them to the gates of glory ; the Physician, who was to cure the inveterate disease which sin had occasioned in our fallen race ; our Intercessor with God, whose mediation must ever prevail for all who put their trust in Him. These are some of those offices, each of them “ Wonderful,” which Jesus came to accomplish in His own person for man. In undertaking these offices He was “ Wonderful” in the merit He manifested ; for in the salvation of man not one of the Divine perfections could be violated in the slightest degree ; and if the Lord Jesus Christ was to secure heaven for us, He must merit it ; it must be a rightful, a just, and a holy thing, that myriads of sinners, released from the curse of the law, should be made heirs of glory. And He did merit it. But what is that amount of merit that could render it just for innumerable sinners—myriads, thank God, before the end come, incon-

ceivable myriads, each of whom had an infinity of ruin before him as the due reward of his demerit, to be all raised to glory by the infinitely transcendent merit of this one glorious Redeemer ?

How "Wonderful" the Saviour, in the wisdom that He manifested in accomplishing this redemption for us ! When He came upon earth, He alone could say that He "searched the hearts and the reins ;" He alone could read the thoughts of men and interpret them ; He alone could know and unfold the mind of God ; He alone could look through the future, near or far off, and tell what was about to happen the next day, the next year, or through all the centuries the world should last. He only could communicate this marvellous gift to others ; He only could give to His disciples—not an independent power, that is incommunicable—but by communicating the facts, He enabled them to unfold the history of His

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on earth! We have seen already that power subduing the elements, commanding spirits, as well as subordinating the wills of men to Himself; but what power did Jesus display on the earth, when He could say to perishing souls destitute of all strength, wisdom, and goodness, as He did when He hung expiring in agony, apparent desertion, and seeming weakness on the cross—declaring with the fiat of omnipotence, that heaven should open its gates to the felon, and that He would welcome him to an endless and boundless glory! What power did He manifest when He subdued the most obdurate enemies and changed them into devoted friends, like Saul of Tarsus! What power will He display again at the last judgment, when invested with Divine authority!—for, “the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son.” He shall summon before Him, reluctant or willing, all generations

of men then living on the earth, and those long buried ; shall bid them reinhabit their bodies ; awaken them from the dust of death ; call them, in company with the angels that attend Him as His train, and the devils who are summoned to hear their final doom ; then He shall, with irresistible power, determine and accomplish His separate judgment on all the vast, the overwhelming host of men, and the spirits before the throne.

How "Wonderful" is this Redeemer, also, in the goodness that He manifested ! How strange, that One so mighty, so wise, so great, should descend to this earth to be a babe, should suffer poverty, shame, and trouble ; How surpassing that goodness, that sought out and courted sorrow, that He might rescue us from its grasp ! How "Wonderful" that goodness, that would be repelled by no obduracy, by no folly, by no weakness of ours, but would patiently, steadily accomplish all those sufferings

through which He was to work out our welfare! How strange and surpassing the goodness, which, after accomplishing our redemption, sought us out, to save us by constraining and all-subduing grace! How "Wonderful" that goodness, which provides that we should "see Him as He is"—man, lost, to "be like Him," to partake of His glory, to enter into His joy! When we count up the innumerable benefits His goodness has secured, and then think how long and how deeply He suffered that we might be thus blessed, the goodness of Christ is as unsearchable as all the other wonders that surround his person.

Lastly, let us notice the wonders of His majesty. He is now, as we have seen, "Head over all things!" Angels delight in serving Him: He is coming to exercise the functions of Deity by judging all mankind, and is, at this moment, seated at the right hand of the glory of God.

This is a brief feeble sketch of the wonders that surpass all thought, which attend this august name. We can know very little of its meaning now—it is meant to describe that He was glorious beyond all investigation—that we could never by searching find out the Infinite; and all we can say and know of this glorious Redeemer is calculated to humble us with the sense of our limited knowledge—it might almost be said our absolute ignorance—of what He is, whose “love passeth knowledge,” and all whose other perfections pass it no less.

But if Jesus is thus “Wonderful” in greatness, and glory, and goodness, then think what the prospect is of those, of whom He has condescended to say, “I will come again and receive you unto Myself”—shrined with the “Wonderful” in His glory for ever—to see the “Wonderful” face to face in his own empire! Happy prospect of those who are ransomed by his blood!

Think of the prospect they have! We are told that when they shall see Him, for it is His will that they should be where He is to behold His glory,—then they “shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is.” Realise that truth: they “shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is.” And with the prospect of catching something of the very radiance of this glorious Redeemer, something of His power, perfection, goodness, and glory, think to what He has raised those hell-doomed sinners, who but for Him would have been crushed under the inevitable curse of God’s broken law for ever and ever.

And if this be the prospect of believers,—and we venture to call ourselves believers, and hope we have trusted in Christ for our everlasting welfare,—then let us never forget that it is declared to be the certain mark of all such, that they “who have this hope in them, purify themselves even as He is

pure." If it is, indeed, our glory to be with Christ hereafter and like Him, then we must aim at conformity to Him, and strive to please and honour Him by growing like Him now ; and if we shrink from that proof of discipleship, let us know that we are no disciples. And if we have that proof of discipleship, let us bless Him that He has given to us the knowledge that we shall be His at the last day ; and press on still that we may reach that glorious inheritance ; and let us make Him the subject of adoring contemplation, as we pass through this besotted world that sees in Him no glory, that passes Him by, that would throw Him out of the system of revelation of which He is the Sun, till we reach that glorious world where His beams shine upon all, where all His radiance,—the glory of the redeemed, His reflected glory, and where the danger of forgetting, denying, or dishonouring Him is no more. May He, the

“ Wonderful ” Saviour condescend to bring us all to this happy end. May His Spirit now act upon our hearts and minds, that we may be counted worthy of a place among His family, when He “ shall come again in His glorious majesty ” — saved from the world, the flesh, and the devil, to praise Him as we ought, to all eternity.

MESSIAH, THE COUNSELLER.

“ HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED COUNSELLER.”


IN the former part of this passage God predicted; that He who was to be born into this world, as the promised Christ, should be a Governor over His church, and over the world ; and this great King, to be born into this world, should be called, in the first place, “ Wonderful.” He should be “ Wonderful,” by reason of the names which He should bear, expressive of the reality ; “ Wonderful” in His nature, in His attributes, in the works which He should accomplish, and in His eternal and universal dominion.

God likewise gives to Him in this prophecy, in the second place, the name of

Counsellor: "He shall be called Counsellor." This word expresses the wisdom of a person accustomed to give sound advice. It is employed in the Bible frequently of those who assisted in the councils of kings. Jonathan, the uncle of David, was called "a wise counsellor" to his prince; Ahithophel, the wisest man of his day, was termed "the king's counsellor," the king's adviser. And thus it is constantly employed, of a person giving sound and wise advice. Jesus Christ, who was to be born into this world, to be the universal King, was to be a wise King, and His name was to be called—"Wonderful, Counsellor."

Here we are led to ask whether he was to be (as Jonathan, and Ahithophel, and others,) the "counsellor" of kings, or whether he was to be the "counsellor" of His own people upon the earth. The prophet who assisted us in answering this question, when he has spoken of God in these terms:

“ Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counsellor hath taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him?” God needs no counsellor; and though it is said in the sixth chapter of the prophet Zechariah, respecting the promised Christ—“ Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the Man whose name is THE BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord: even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a Priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both,”—yet this would seem to express the communication of the whole purpose and design of Jehovah, respecting the deliverance of His people, and the peace to be restored between heaven and earth, rather than the receiving counsel from Him. “ The counsel of peace” would



“ be between them both,” because the Almighty God would communicate to Him the whole plan of redemption, and commit it to Him to accomplish. Thus “ the counsel of peace,” the plan and design by which peace was to be produced between sinners and God, was to be placed in His hands—in the hands of the Man “ whose name was The Branch”—in the hands of Him who was to be born into the world, as the universal King; and viewing Him in this light—as a King born into the world, as the Man Christ Jesus—our Lord speaks not of counselling the Father, but of receiving counsel from Him, in language like this, which we find in the fifteenth chapter of St. John, and the fifteenth verse, and many other places—“ All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.” So that the usual language of Scripture would not lead us to speak of our Redeemer, when He came into this world, as the

“Counsellor” of God, but would rather lead us to consider the word “Counsellor” as having exclusive reference to the counsel which He would give to man. He has become the adviser of His people,—that great Being who should give to all that should ever be saved, the needful counsel, by which they should reach everlasting life, and thus become the “Counsellor” of the church and of the world.

This name, then, evidently implies these three things respecting Him ; first, that He should possess adequate wisdom ; secondly, that he should communicate this wisdom by positive instruction ; and thirdly, that He should advise, as well as teach—that He should urge and persuade men to receive that instruction. These three ideas seem contained in this name given to Christ : “ He shall be called Counsellor.”

I. The three attributes thus ascribed to

Him receive abundant illustration from the facts of His life on earth. Jesus was that Christ, that "Counsellor." When He came into the world, He descended from the bosom of God; He came forth from the Father, and came into the world. He was from all eternity with God, as St. John expressly declares; and therefore being from before the foundation of the world with God, He would certainly know God; and He claimed this knowledge continually, when He was upon earth. "As the Father knoweth Me," He says, "even so I know the Father." He had the same knowledge of the Father, as the Father had of Him; and as whatever other instruction men had received respecting Him, they had no independent spiritual knowledge of God, no just acquaintance with God, so that Jesus could say most truly to the most learned and thoughtful of them—"Ye neither know Me nor my Father"—though they could

give an accurate account of all the declared perfections of God,—so He could say, that “no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.”

As he was thus acquainted with God, He was acquainted with man; and He could say to each of the seven churches, and therefore to all the churches upon the earth—“I know thy works.” Nay, He claimed another knowledge than that to be obtained by watching the works of man. He could not only declare that He knew the works of man, but He said expressly, in the second chapter of the Book of Revelation—“All the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.” So that as He “searches the reins and the hearts,” He is competent to judge the whole assembled

myriads of mankind, when all their buried generations shall revive, and He shall so judge the quick and dead, at His appearing. What a prodigious knowledge and omniscience is involved in an acquaintance with all the demerit of every being that has ever lived on the earth; involving a just perception, not only of the thoughts, but of the most latent motive that ever mingled with the least action that has been performed on the earth, which will all be brought into judgment by Him of whom the apostle could say—"We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ!" And, therefore, being thus acquainted with God and with man—having all knowledge—He who is the searcher of the heart has wisdom enough to guide His people through time to eternity, and to be their most effectual and safest "*Counsellor.*"

II. But the term implies, further, that He would communicate instruction, as

well as be qualified to do so. And this includes the fulfilment of an earlier promise, made by Moses to the church of God, in the eighteenth chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy, where he says:—"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, like unto Me." Jesus came, then, to be this prophet, to speak with authority from God, and thus to communicate that instruction to mankind, and especially to believers, which was needful for their welfare. He came, according to the Divine appointment, to reveal the character of God, which He knew; and, Himself perfectly acquainted with God, to communicate to mankind that amount of knowledge respecting God which they were capable of receiving. He could therefore say repeatedly, when He was upon earth, that He had manifested the name of God (that is, His character,) to His disciples, who received His instruction. "I have," He said, "declared unto them Thy

name, and will declare it,"—making known to them all the perfections of God.

Thus instructing them, He was qualified to fulfil a prediction, which we find in the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah, that He should come to communicate glad tidings to His own people: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek." Whoever should be found made by grace to be humble, and as perishing transgressors needing a Saviour, should have "glad tidings" communicated to them; and that promise implies the whole of the revelation which God has given us by Christ; the revelation of our condition and prospects, the revelation of all the doctrine which was needful for us to receive, and the revelation of all those practical precepts by which we might be guided through life. Jesus came, as the Prophet of His church, "to preach glad tidings to the meek." He has fulfilled that office, and in His Word has *communicated* to us an amount of religious

knowledge such as the world could not otherwise have attained, and which is perfectly calculated to answer all the purposes He designed.

He has revealed to us our condition as sinners distinctly. He has shown us that we are perishing, by a plain declaration which He has given us Himself, and which His apostles have subsequently given us by His authority; He has unfolded to us distinctly that we may be saved gratuitously by trusting in Him; He has made known to us the grace of God to convinced and confiding sinners, who would thus trust in His blood when they had nothing else to trust to; He has unfolded to us our immortality, shown us the kingdom of glory and the place of ruin, directed us distinctly and plainly as to the road which we must take to escape the one and to reach the other—giving us at the same time, by Himself and His inspired apostles, (the messengers whom He sent forth to the world, to

convey His message to mankind,) all those aids needful for us in our weakness, by which we may reach in safety the eternal life He has opened to our view.

While He has thus given us this body of doctrine, which we could not have obtained without Him, and which is perfect in all its parts, leaving nothing for us to desire, although we might have our curiosity often gratified—but containing, if we are serious and earnest, all the directions necessary to guide us along the safest and most pleasant road to the happiest end,—He has given us precepts equally valuable, and abundantly calculated to direct each of us, while in this world, to all that it is our advantage to cultivate or avoid. He has taught us that we must believe in Him, that we must follow Him, that we must abide in Him, that we must love Him, that we must obey His law, that we must imitate His example, that we must pray in His name, and so doing, has attached the most abundant promises to

these habits ; and with respect to our conduct towards God and towards each other, has given us all the advice which we need ; He has counselled us to love God supremely ; He has counselled us further to love others as ourselves ; and if we follow His instructions in His Word, we shall be upright, honourable, just, and true ; we shall be sober and chaste, and amiable, as well as firm ; we shall be meek, and gentle, and patient, and forgiving, while adhering to truth and duty. If we follow His instructions, we shall cultivate every social virtue, and repress every thing which can either injure others or dishonour God, and may form, by a regard to His instructions, such characters as are never formed upon any other plan. If we only follow His guidance, we may rise to the greatest attainments, and all social excellencies, while we are manifestly preparing for His kingdom of glory. So that if we fail in any of these particulars, *either in our conduct towards God or*

towards each other, it is not for want of instruction, but simply from the perverseness or infirmity of our own hearts. His guidance is complete, and he has abundantly fulfilled the office which He came to exercise, as the predicted Prophet of His people.

III. But there is a third thing evidently contained in the name before us. When it was said that Jesus, the Son of Mary, the "Child" born into this world, the universal King, should be a "Counsellor," it was further implied that He should advise us—that He should not merely give us instruction, but urge us to receive that instruction—that He should not merely unfold to us truth and duty, but should likewise persuade us to embrace the truth, and to follow the instructions which He gives. He was to come that He might be our "Counsellor." As the former part of His *office implies* that He should instruct His

people by His Word, so this further unfolds to us that He should be an effectual instructor. He is no less the teacher of His people, as their Prophet, now, than He was when He orally conveyed instruction to His disciples, or to the Jewish multitudes. Of this He has informed us, when He said to His disciples—"Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." He is, then, still the teacher of mankind, because "to the end of the world" He was to accompany the efforts of His disciples to teach the nations. "Go ye, and teach all nations; and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!"

With respect, therefore, to the instructions given by His inspired apostles, the apostle Paul could say to the Colossian church—
"*Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly;*" and in listening to the instructions

conveyed by them, they listened to the instructions of Christ. Those instructions have descended to us, and the New Testament is the teaching of Christ to each of us. By Himself and by His apostles, He has in that Book embodied all the instruction, of a doctrinal and of a practical kind, which was needful to make us wise and happy.

But we wanted something more than this, or else His office of prophet would have failed to accomplish its design. Those whose hearts are set against the truth, who are enveloped in incurable prejudices, and whose levity cannot be reduced to seriousness, but who, nevertheless, have all the instruction which the revelation of God in His Word could give, yet remain in utter spiritual darkness; and therefore, if Jesus was to be our prophet, and if He was to teach us in a manner that might save our *souls*, He must teach us effectually. He *must make the truth to reach our under-*

standings and our hearts. And this He in fact did, when He told His disciples that He would give to them another Comforter, who should abide with them for ever, and added—"He shall teach you all things." Now this promise is a promise of inspiration to His twelve apostles—that they should receive from Him unerring instruction in all that it was necessary for us to know; so that they might reveal to us His mind, without any admixture of error. But although in this and other promises He gave them that assurance, and has furnished us with a warrant for believing that their words are His words, yet still, as all His disciples would need that teaching,—not inspiration, but such an influence of the Holy Ghost as should guide them into a saving acquaintance with truth,—we may infer that the promise itself was meant to apply further than to those twelve apostles, and that He meant, what in fact has taken place, that the Spirit of God descending

from Him should guide all who needed teaching into a saving acquaintance with Divine truth.

Perhaps we might not be able so to expound this passage, if it stood alone. As it certainly applies to the illumination and guidance of His apostles, it might have been referred to that alone ; but there are many passages in the New Testament which show that this additional instruction is needed by all, and was promised to all. Indeed, he led His disciples to expect this, when He said of the mission of the Comforter—" He shall convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." " He shall convince " sinners of their ruined state, by making them see the guilt of their rejecting Christ ; " He shall convince " sinners, hitherto obdurate, " of righteousness"—that there is a righteousness to be imputed to them by God, wrought out through the sacrifice of Christ. " Of righteousness, because I go to My Father,

and ye see Me no more." The resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, under the teaching of the Spirit, should be a sufficient proof to men that there should be a "justification through faith in His blood," which those who were taught of Him should welcome.

Now as it was promised that He should not only convince the apostles, but all mankind,—at first a small company of His people, brought out of the world, from age to age, and at length mankind (for He shall ultimately convince the world), we might expect that even to our own day He would still communicate the Spirit, to enlighten mankind, as He had communicated the revelation of truth by His disciples. And this, we learn from the apostles, He did. Before He ascended to His glory St. Luke informs us, in the twenty-fourth chapter of his Gospel, He "opened their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures." Not merely de-

clarating the doctrine that could be found in the Old Testament respecting Him, but removing the prejudice and the blindness from their minds, so that their understandings should no longer repel those doctrines, or be incapable of observing them. "Then opened He their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures." Now that which was thus accomplished for the chosen eleven, was afterwards accomplished for the whole of the Christian churches; otherwise the apostle Paul could not have prayed for the Ephesian Church: "Wherefore I also cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened." These Christians at Ephesus were to receive the Spirit of God as a "Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, so that their under-

standings might be enlightened," which was something clearly distinct from the revelation which in itself might leave them still in darkness. Again, the heart of Lydia at Philippi would have remained closed against the Gospel, unless Christ had opened her heart. "Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." Now that which was accomplished for one person, brought by grace to receive the Gospel, is equally necessary for all: and as God is no respecter of persons, and not capricious in the dispensation of His gifts, we might expect that those generally who are brought to Christ would be brought in the same manner—their hearts being opened, so that they should no longer repel the truth by their hardness, their neglect, their levity, their indifference, or by any of those evil passions which obstruct the way of the *truth in the minds and hearts* of so many. *And this is the way in which persons are*

brought into subjugation to the Gospel ; it is not by their own unassisted efforts, but as the apostle Peter tells us, in the first chapter of his first epistle, that the Christians of his time “purified their souls, in obeying the truth, through the Spirit.” No man is brought to yield to the truth of God, which is obnoxious and hateful to us in our fallen state—no man brings his heart into subjection to the truth, and comes under its subduing power, except God the Spirit leads him so to do. “Ye have purified your souls, in obeying the truth, through the Spirit.”

Hence, then, the Lord Jesus Christ still communicates His Spirit to men, in order to open their understandings and their hearts ; just as He did when at the outpouring of His Spirit on the day of Pentecost, three thousand were subdued at once by the Gospel, and disregarding all the *differences* in their circumstances, and *putting away* from them all considerations

of worldly ease or comfort altogether, at once embraced the Gospel of Christ,—just as much does Jesus Christ now communicate His Spirit, to subdue men to Himself, in the same manner, and is thus their effectual Counsellor. He has given instruction by His Word, but He makes that instruction effectual by His Spirit. He is their prophet, and He is their Counsellor.

All the instruction He has given is sincere, and calculated to act upon our minds and hearts, if our prejudice of understanding is removed, and if the bad passions of our hearts are controlled. He is “the amen,” according to the name which He himself assumes, “the faithful and true witness,” none of whose words deceive us, and whose revelation of truth will stand, when heaven and earth pass away. But in order to feel the force of this sincerity, and to confide in this perfect truth, *we must have the instruction His Spirit gives; the Spirit of God must prepare our*

minds and hearts. And He sends forth that Spirit still in this capacity, towards the church, as "Counsellor," in order that the sincerity of His instructions may act upon our minds and hearts.

By this effectual teaching we learn also to feel the kindness of His instructions: there is something in the instructions of Christ, when prejudice is over, which is more calculated to affect and subdue us than any thing else is likely to do. The instructions, doctrinal and practical, which He has given us in His Word, by Himself and by His apostles, are the instructions of One who died to make us happy, who has borne our punishment Himself, who has released us from the penalty due to our sins, (which would have made us miserable for ever,) not merely by the word of a monarch, but by undergoing the sentence Himself; and there is something so divinely compassionate, so unspeakably condescending in *this act of Christ*, that when the prejudice

of the mind and the corrupt passions of the heart, which obstruct the entrance of the truth, are removed by grace, it is abundantly calculated to subdue our hearts to Himself. He who, when He was upon earth, taught His disciples as though He had been their brother, and said to them—“Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you; henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends”—is as gracious still, and in His glory does not hesitate, as He has taught us by the apostle Paul, to call every believer in Him His brother: “For this cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” And therefore this instruction, given in the New Testament, is the instruction of one who loves us, and if we are His disciples, one who is watching over us, one who sympathises with all we feel, one who is *unspeakably* patient, one who says to us *unquestionably*, just what he said to those

around Him, when He was upon earth—
 “Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest;”
 “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.”
 He who on earth was “meek and lowly in heart, and therefore a teacher to whom the sinful, and the ignorant, and the depressed might love to come, is still as condescending in His glory as He was “meek and lowly” upon earth; and when any one asks Him for wisdom, “giveth liberally and upbraideth not.” He is thus calculated in every way to fulfil the office which was assigned Him in this prophecy, when it was said that “His name should be called Counseller.”

How He counselled sinners, when He was upon earth, we may judge by some instances upon record. He was a good “Counsellor” to Matthew, when He not *only said to him*, “Follow Me,” but by the *pervading influence of His Spirit made the*

publican give up all his worldly prospects, associate himself with His followers, and at once follow Him himself. He was a good "Counsellor" to Mary Magdalene, when, according to God's promise, He spoke those "good tidings of great joy," which announced that to her, all ruined as she was, there was a great and free salvation, and by the influence of His Spirit accompanying that message, so wrought in her soul that she could not repress the floods of penitential and joyful emotion, with which she expressed her gratitude for such a Master. He was a good "Counsellor" to Mary of Bethany, when, as she sat at His feet and listened to His word, He made that word so to penetrate her heart, that she was satiated with that heavenly wisdom. He was a good "Counsellor" to Paul, when He made him so listen to His words, as to cause him, *renouncing all his proud independence, to say at once, Pharisee as he was to that*

hour—"Lord, what wouldest Thou have me to do?" He was a good "Counsellor" to Zaccheus, when He not only made him, by the efficacy of His grace, welcome Him to his house, but also to his heart, and seeing the thorough and eternal change wrought in the covetous and grinding publican, could say to him—"Verily, this day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham."

Now what he wrought in the lives, and minds, and hearts of these persons, by his effectual counsel, He is working every day in the hearts, and lives, and minds of numbers. He is present in every worshipping assembly, present in every household where a few meet together in His name, present with every single person seeking His aid. Our blessed Redeemer is still the "Counsellor" of perishing sinners, both by His Word and by His Spirit, enlightening *their understandings* and subduing *their hearts*,—so that many are undergoing pre-

cisely the same change which was wrought in Matthew, and in Mary Magdalene, and in Mary of Bethany, and in Saul of Tarsus, and in Zaccheus. This great change is wrought, not so much by the instrumentality of the Gospel, as by the agency Christ employed to make that instrumentality effectual: so that those who are trifling become serious; those who are selfish become affectionate; those who are of desperate worldliness, attaching all their hopes to this world, grow spiritual; those who would indulge their own will, though ruin was before them, become submissive to the will of God, and obey the Gospel; those who were destitute of principle become high-principled: and these changes, wrought in the hearts of many, last through life. The noblest characters are formed, just as they were then, from the most unpromising materials; and these changes, *which might* be thought only destined to *last for a day*, as they were wrought in a

day, are proved to be everlasting—the foundation of perpetual improvement: so that those who are “led by the Spirit” demonstrate, by growing godliness, though they were once profane and earthly, that “being led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God,” and are preparing for everlasting joy.

Christ is a good “Counsellor” still, to all who listen to His counsels. Oh! that He would condescend to make us comprehend His goodness, in relation to His church! We have to listen to His instructions, to remember that He is the living and ever-present Saviour, who is present with every one who seeks His care and grace. When he was appointed of God to become a Prophet to His Church, it was with this distinct admonition to those for whom He should exercise this office: “He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him; and it shall come to pass, that *whosoever* will not hearken to My words.

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And therefore, my brethren, let us listen to Him. The exhortation which God has given us is, that we should listen to Him. As much as though He were still on this earth, as much as though we sat around Him on the Mount, when He discoursed to the Jewish multitudes, let us now make His Word our guide—read it, think over it, grasp it, keep it—constantly maintaining the truths we receive from it, and abiding by the precepts which it unfolds. We must listen to Christ. As Mary sat at His feet and listened to Him, and Jesus distinctly eulogised her choice, when He said she had “chosen that good part which should not be taken away from her,”—so let us love to learn from our Lord and Saviour. Let us receive the Word, which He has given us, coming to us by His authority; and more than that—as He promises the gift of His Holy Spirit, to make that Word *effectual*—let us look to Him for that *likewise*. And surely that prayer, which the

apostle Paul could make for the church at Ephesus, should be the prayer which each one of us puts up for himself: that we may receive "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of our understanding being enlightened."

But if we listen to His words, we must ever listen practically. Christ has declared that those who hear His words, and do not keep them, have no more a solid foundation for their eternal happiness than the man has for temporal security who has built his house upon the sand; the higher it rises, and the more solid the structure, the more certain is it to perish, for the want of a foundation; he, and he alone, who listens to the words of Christ, and keeps them, is the man that has built his hope as a structure founded upon a rock. And therefore let us welcome each doctrine which *Christ has given us, to our hearts, and aim to follow each precept which is founded*

upon those doctrines. By so doing our peace may grow ; we may be useful to our fellow men, we may glorify God, and may be manifestly and daily preparing for the kingdom of glory,—known to ourselves, and to all around us, to be the children of God, because we are led by His Spirit, according to His Word.

Oh ! let us take heed that we do not disregard this office of Christ ; but on the contrary, since we have the privilege of looking to Him as our “ Counsellor ” at this moment, let us resolve, by God’s help, to go to Him as our “ Counsellor ” every day ; intending to be led by Him in all things, to be guided by His Word, and to have that Word made effectual by Christ himself through the gift of His Spirit. He will not disregard our efforts or our wishes. As many of us as have formed these habits have found a blessing in them. *If we have made Christ our “ Counsellor ; and have sought instruction from His*

Word, and from Him by His Spirit, we have already attained to spiritual knowledge and much comfort: let us persevere in it. And may they who have never formed those habits, through God's help begin at once and since it is said of Jesus, the Saviour the Christ, that He is the "Counsellor" of His church and of the world, let all of us feeling our need of guidance and control come to Him every day, to be taught "the truth as it is in Him," and to learn from Him those practical rules of action, which penetrating our hearts and forming our character, may enable us to discharge our duties aright while here below, and prepare us for the employments of heaven here after.

MESSIAH, THE MIGHTY GOD.

“ HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED, THE MIGHTY GOD.”

Isaiah, ix. 6.

THIS prediction, like the preceding, refers to the promised Child, who was to come into the world, “ to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel.” “ The government” was to “ be upon His shoulder,” and “ His name” was to “ be called Wonderful, Counseller, the Mighty God.” As we have already seen, He was not to bear those names familiarly, but to be what those names describe. Jesus, the Messiah, to whom this prediction refers, never bore these names literally whilst on earth, but was what they describe; according to the language in the book of God elsewhere, respecting the Almighty Himself and others, in which it is represented to us, that to be called “ Wonderful;

meant that He should be truly wonderful in His nature, in His attributes, and in His works. This wonderful King was to be called "Counseller," because He was to be wise, to instruct the human race; and He was to be called "the Mighty God," because He was to be a monarch as powerful as He was wise, and, therefore, able to bear the burden of His universal government, and impose His laws upon mankind. He was, therefore, to be called "Wonderful, Counseller, the Mighty God."

He was to be called "the Mighty God," because He was to be so—to be God the Mighty, and, consequently, could exercise the universal government He was destined to establish and to uphold.

Considering the claims of christianity—the obligation that lies on every one who receives it, to change his whole life, and to live to God—it was not in the least likely *that it should* be established in the world *without numerous enemies, and the most*

persevering opposition. It was not in the least likely that the enemies of the Deity of Christ (that is, of christianity) should pass by a passage like this, which establishes his Deity ; it was to be expected that ingenuity would be taxed to the utmost, to make it mean something which it does not mean ; and because the truth founded on it is so great, and because the consequences to be proved from it are so momentous, it is right before we use it as an instrument of establishing this truth—before we let our spirits rest upon it, and be filled with it—it is right that we should consider the proofs that these words are rightly translated, and that Jesus was to be called—that is, He was to be —“ the Mighty God.”

There have been many efforts made to make these words mean something else. One learned writer would alter these three words thus : “ Counsellor, Mighty God ;” *he would translate, “ Consulter of the*

Mighty God." But in changing the into that expression he has given the word "Counsellor" a sense which it bears, and cannot bear; it does not denote one who consults another, but one who gives counsel to another. It is an active participle, expressing the fact that one consults another. Nor do either, as learned men assure us, the accents or the syntax permit that the word "Counsellor" should be connected thus with "The Mighty God." It is, therefore, a false interpretation. The phrase does not mean "Consulter of the Mighty God;" it means "Counsellor of the Mighty God."

Another enemy of the Deity of Christ learned and in many respects an estimable man, proposes to render it, "The Counselor of God the Mighty:" but there are the same objections to his proposal as to the other. The word "Counsellor" cannot be connected according to the writing of the word with "The Counselor of God," but must

by itself; and the words "Mighty God" cannot be separated, but must be taken together. Moreover, "The Counsellor of God" is a phrase never found in the Scriptures, and to which no good meaning can be attached, whilst the other expression, "The Mighty God," is repeatedly found there, and found in the same connexion. So that it is to do violence to the use of language in the Old Testament, to change "The Counsellor, the Mighty God," into the expression, "The Counsellor of God the Mighty."

It has, therefore, been proposed by another enemy of the Deity of Christ, that the passage should be rendered thus: "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God is mighty,"—implying not that He should be called "the Mighty God," but that He should express to man the truth that God is mighty. But names of this *kind occur frequently in Scripture, and the connexion of them is little different to this.*

These words are *El Gibbor*, "the Mighty God;" and if the word had been such as Gabriel, Michael, and others, it must have been *Gibbor El*, and not *El Gibbor*. A name, therefore, if we take it as a name, it must mean "the Mighty God," and not "God is mighty."

This, other learned adversaries of Christ have seen and owned; and, therefore, some of them propose to separate these two words, still against the interpretation which the Jewish editors and transcribers of the Bible have given to it, and would call the name "Counsellor, God, Mighty"—"Counsellor, *El*, Mighty." But besides that, according to the pointing of the words, the two words "Mighty God" cannot be separated, passing by this grand criticism altogether it is obvious that the words cannot be used—it is trifling with them, for the word *El*, if it does not mean God, must have its original meaning, in which it is, in a few places out of many in Scripture, transl

“Power.” The expression would, therefore, stand thus: “He shall be called Counsellor, Power, Mighty;” a feeble tautology, you perceive: mighty, mighty, and nothing else. To give such a sense is evidently to trifle with the language; and no man could have imagined such a mode of evading the difficulty, unless some great difficulty were to be evaded.

The most powerful, however, of all these efforts to evade its force, seems to be that of a very learned antagonist to the Deity of Christ, who would translate the phrase, “the mighty hero,” the mighty-*El*, asserting that the word *El* may mean not God, but man. Now a very few plain remarks may serve to show how utterly incapable this supposition is of being maintained.

In the first place, the word *El* occurs many times—certainly above a hundred times, probably many more, in the *Old Testament*. In these places it occurs almost uniformly as the name of God, and fre-

quently in the most emphatic passages, of which it will be sufficient to mention two. In the first verse of the 17th chapter of Genesis, we read these words: "I am the Almighty *El*; walk before Me, and be thou perfect." When God would speak of His supremacy and his almightiness, His being alone self-existent, He speaks of himself as *El*:—"I am the Almighty *El*." So in the 90th Psalm, in a passage solemnly declaring the eternity of this mysterious Being, the expression is this: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." Thou art *El*; not *Jehovah*, but *El*. So that in many of the most solemn passages of Scripture this name is given to God. On the other hand, there is not, I believe, a single passage where this word, in the singular, is applied to *man*. It would, therefore, be contrary to *the whole language* of the Old Testament,

if in this passage it were to be referred to man, and were to be translated, "the mighty man," "the mighty hero."

There are various passages, further, in which the word *El* is distinctly contrasted with man; of which it is enough to mention two. Thus it is said in the 23rd of Numbers, and the 19th verse, "God is not a man"—"*El* is not man." Now, if the word *El* meant man, this sentence would read, "man is not man"—"*El* is not man," whereas the word *El* (God) is distinctly contrasted with man, and therefore cannot be supposed to mean man. Again, in the 28th of Ezekiel, at the second verse, it is said to the king of Tyre, "Thou art a man, and not *El*." Why, if *El* meant man, it would be, "Thou art a man, and not a man." So that the contrast between the word *El* and man, shews that a force has been put upon the word by that learned writer, who would translate the phrase before us, "the mighty hero."

Again, there are passages which distinctly declare that there is but one and that there is no other; whereas, if could mean a man, there might be many such. If we turn to the 45th of Isaiah (and there are many similar passages we read in the 22d verse, "Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of earth; for I am *El*, and there is none else." If man could be *El*, and the word could mean simply "a hero," a man, there might be many such, and the Lord could not say, "I am *El*, and there is none else."

Moreover, this expression, "mighty God," *El Gibbor*, is in various places the name God has selected for himself. So in a passage we read in the 10th of Isaiah at the 21st verse: "The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto *Gibbor*," "the Mighty God." *Jehovah* there assumes the name which in the passage before us is given to the Messiah.

which should be born into the world. We here read, "His name shall be called *El Gibbor*;" and in this verse of the 10th of Isaiah, and various other places, it is said, "The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto *El Gibbor*," "the Mighty God."

These passages seem distinctly and undeniably to prove that the plain natural meaning of the words is the one before us, "Mighty God;" which is the more easily believed to be the meaning, with reference to the Messiah, because, in the 7th chapter of Isaiah, a similar name is given to the Messiah: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel, God with us." So that the Messiah had previously received a name very similar to that in this passage, the one prophecy stating He should be called "*El Gibbor*," and the other, He should be called "*Emmanuel*, God with us."

These passages, then, prove to an honest

and earnest person, who wishes to derive his views of truth simply from God's Word that the Messiah to be born into the world was to have the name of the one eternal incomprehensible, almighty, unchangeable God. "His name shall be called the Mighty God." If this passage stood alone it would be difficult to evade its force; but even if this passage, and ten others like it were to be subtracted from the Word of God, the Deity of Christ, that great fundamental truth of our religion, would remain still surrounded with a splendour of evidence which no honest and earnest mind could resist. The whole Book of God is full of it. God has given to the Messiah in His Word all His own names; He has revealed in His Word that Jesus our Saviour has all his glorious and incommunicable attributes; He has distinctly and repeatedly told us in His Word that Jesus *executes* all the functions of Deity, *fulfills all the works* of God; and finally, He has

solemnly declared that Jesus has all the honours of God.

There are four names by which the Almighty is especially designated in the Bible, besides this name of *El*. These are *Jehovah*, *Adonai*, *Elohim*, and *Theos*. All these names are given to Jesus in the inspired Word. He is called *Jehovah* in the 6th of Isaiah; He is called *Adonai* in the 3d of Malachi, and various other places; He is termed *Elohim* in the 45th Psalm; and He is termed *Theos* continually. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God." "Take heed to yourselves, and unto all the flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the flock of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." "Of Him, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh." The most perverse criticisms are not able to prove to

me that these words mean anything but what they express, that Jesus is *El Gibbor* the one Almighty God; and whereas the Almighty declared in one place that His name was incommunicable and incomprehensible, being "I AM THAT I AM," and said that Moses should declare to his people, "I AM hath sent me unto you," the self-existent, eternal, and incomprehensible Jesus Christ, when he would declare to the Jews that He had lived before the time of Abraham, though He was at that time but a man less than thirty-three years of age in this world, solemnly said, "Before Abraham was, I am." So, then, He bears all the names of God.

Moreover, the Word of God declares, in innumerable places, that He has the attributes of God. The Word of God declares that Jesus came down from heaven, that He was the companion of God, that He *was with the Father* from all eternity, and *was Himself* eternal. It speaks of Him

exercising omnipotent power ; He is also declared to be omnipresent and omniscient. Distinctly does the Apostle say of Him, that He is unchangeable. And thus all the great and incommunicable attributes of God are ascribed to Jesus our Saviour.

Nor less distinctly do the Scriptures speak of Him as executing all the powers of God. The works that He wrought when He was upon earth were such as nothing but the Divine power could accomplish ; and those works were wrought in His name, and therefore by His own Divine power. He banished disease, He commanded the elements, He made the very devils obey Him, He created food, He recalled departed spirits to their bodies, which they had deserted, and Himself, by His own power, rose again from the dead, after He had descended into the grave. These are the works of God.

But the Scriptures obviously, in many places, ascribe to Him these powers in a

sense far higher than those miracles which He wrought when He was upon earth. "By Him were all things created," the apostle declares in his epistle to Colossians. "God by Him made the worlds," we read at the commencement of St. John's Gospel. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." He is also declared by the apostle Paul, in several places, to "uphold all things." He is the Preserver of those worlds which He has formed: "upholding all things by the word of His power." To Him is ascribed, as God, the power of forgiving sins. He forgave them when He was upon earth; and hence the apostle, in writing to the churches, could tell them that they were forgiven their sins by Christ. *To Him is ascribed also the power of raising the dead.* He has life in Himself, and

can restore life to our decayed frames. He will, by His mighty word, at length raise the dead ; and this Glorious Being, now on the throne of the universe, will at length summon all departed beings to His bar, and will there, with a power nothing less than infinite, and a knowledge truly divine, determine, according to the secret thoughts of all the millions that ever lived, their destinies in the eternal world. So that the works of God are likewise frequently ascribed to Jesus our Saviour, in the Holy Scriptures.

And, lastly, God has declared that He should have the honour of God. It was His will that " all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father ; " and for this reason was it assigned to Him, that He should judge the quick and dead at His appearing and His kingdom. Angels, when He came into this world, were *therefore summoned* to worship the Man, Christ *Jesus* ; and when he ascended up to His

glory, by His own Divine power, then did all of His Disciples begin to call upon His name, and worship Him as God. Just as they invoked the name of God, so did they invoke the name of Jesus; just as they spread out their wants before their heavenly Father, so did they spread them out before their Divine Redeemer. All beings are destined to bow the knee before Him, reluctantly or voluntarily. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Do not these frequent expressions of God's Word, then, sustain the statement before us, and prove that we cannot err when we believe this prediction to mean *that Jesus, the Christ, should be called "the Mighty God?"* If He were not "the

Mighty God," just consider for a moment what the consequences of that supposition must be.

If Jesus is not "the Mighty God," but is what a learned enemy of Christianity declares, an illustrious man, why then, Jesus Christ misled His disciples, and misled His enemies, when He was on earth. When He claimed to be one with God; when He declared Himself to be the Son of God, so that He had a right to work on His sabbath, as His Father worked; when He proclaimed that He was the "I AM;" when He declared that by His own power He would rise again from the dead,—he led the Jews to believe that He was an impostor; they believed it, and He never undeceived them: He still maintained His assertions, and led them to believe He was a deceiver. Now if He were not, and if He knew He was not, "the *Mighty God*," then He was an impostor, *and the Jews were right; and between this*

statement—that Jesus is an impostor, and Jesus is “the Mighty God”—there is no standing place, there is no rest for the mind. It is vain to say He is worthy of our profound veneration, but not worthy to be adored ; Jesus is either God, or Jesus was a blasphemer, and the Jews were right ; and if they ought not to have bowed to Him, as their Divine Redeemer, then, by the Mosaic law, they were bound to put Him to death. But He who claimed these glories, died for our sakes in the hands of His enemies ; by an energy the grave could not resist, and devils could not extinguish, rose again, and in sight of His admiring and joyful followers ascended up to His glory. Therefore, Jesus was “the Mighty God.”

If He were not God, then had the Jews only judged rightly in putting Him to death, according to the Mosaic law. For that *God would have blessed them, who declared that if they resisted and rejected idolatry,*

they should be blessed by Him. But for that very act those Jews were then sentenced to rapid destruction, and the wrath of God speedily came upon them to the utmost ; and now, through many centuries, for a work which if Jesus was not "the Mighty God," was a work of justice and of duty, they are miserable wanderers upon the earth. Could God thus punish an action which would be in itself laudable, if Jesus were not God ?

And what were His disciples, upon this supposition, who went forth from Jerusalem itself to declare this risen Saviour—to tell the world that He was "God manifest in the flesh," before all His enemies, and even to seal their testimony with their lives ? These were no enthusiasts ; they could not have mistaken His words ; there were too many to be deceived. Or if they could have been deceived, how are we to understand the fact that they spoke in foreign *languages*, that they wrought wondrous *miracles*, that they communicated super-

natural gifts throughout the world? How was it possible that they could thus sanctify and uphold the grossest imposition ever practised upon mankind? If Jesus was not God, then there never has been a delusion so complete as that which they were the instruments of promulgating among mankind, with a success not only unparalleled but even inconceivable.

And if they had been thus mistaken, and Jesus was not God, then what is the condition of Christians now? Let us remember that there is no interval—there is nothing between a just worship of Jesus, as Divine and the most deep-rooted, the most obstinate, the most obnoxious idolatry that this earth has ever witnessed. It is vain to declare that we are innocent; God's Word declares that the idolater shall be accursed. And if Jesus is not God, we are idolaters; and idolaters, whatever men may fancy, "*shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone,*" because they are

abomination to the infinite God. And yet, if we believe in Him as our Saviour, God will dignify us with immortal honours, and will raise us into the condition of His children. "Ye are all the children of God." Why? For your good actions? For your repentance? For your devotedness? No; ye are all the children of God because you trust in a Divine Saviour: "Ye are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus," So that the same faith which would make us idolaters, worthy of eternal fire, raises us to the condition of God's children, to be blessed with Him for ever!

If Jesus is not the Son of God, Divine, "the Mighty God," then we are trusters in man, and our doom is pronounced in those emphatic words of the prophet Jeremiah: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord;" because trust in man *diverts the heart from the Lord.* The *man who trusts in man to save him is by*

God's sure Word accursed. Whether that man be himself or another, it makes no difference ; the man who rests his hope of everlasting happiness on anything short of God Himself, must (and justly) be accursed. Trust in Jesus Christ is that which alone has removed from us the intolerable load of the Divine wrath, which alone has swept away our guilt, and made us stand blameless before God. "Therefore we conclude," says the apostle, "that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." "By faith" in whom? "By faith in Christ Jesus." And if He is not God, then we are trusting in man, and there is this opposition between the words of God himself—that the very same act exposes us to the curse, and frees us from the curse.—It is impossible.

If Jesus be not God, what is the Word of God? How has it been constructed? It was taught to holy men by the Spirit of *God, indited by Him*, so that each word is *in its proper place*, and conveys its proper

meaning, and, as the gift of Infinite Wisdom, was designed to lead mankind to glory. And what has it done? It has led us helplessly to the most intolerable error: not when we were thoughtless, but when we were most thoughtful; not when we were ignorant of its worth, but when we searched it, hour by hour, in earnest; not when we depended on ourselves, but when we asked guidance of God! After all, this Word of God, constructed by Him, has led us helplessly into an intolerable error! Is it conceivable? To ascribe this to God is to impute to Him what the worst tyrant on earth would never do—blind us first, and then punish us for that blindness.

If Jesus be not God, then truth has been stricken with impotence in the world, and error has clothed itself with all the powers of truth. If Jesus be not God, a delusion has been the greatest benefaction to mankind; there has been no good done on *earth* comparable to that which has been

done by this error. You cannot show a single truth—no, nor ten truths—that have wrought for mankind such amazing benefit as the atoning sacrifice of Christ, by which the human heart, alienated and shut against God, at last opens to receive its Maker and its King; by which societies and nations have been regenerated, in the lower sense of the word—made other than what they were. While some have received regeneration of heart before God, nations have had their institutions purified, and their national character raised and elevated, by this error which has been promulgated among mankind. God has signally blessed error and frowned upon truth. If Jesus be not God, then the Almighty in giving circulation to that error, allowed innumerable beings—the most thoughtful, the most devout, the most prayerful in spirit, those who loved and served Him most diligently—to embrace it; *and those who did not embrace it were suffered now and then to make some*

miserable, abortive effort, which terminated in nothing, while idolaters under the curse of God have been sending their missionaries every where, and carrying on their most strenuous efforts for the conversion of the world, and are now looking for the world's conquest.

If we could think that Jesus was not God, God's providence could no longer be understood. It would seem to us that there was an obscuration come upon all the attributes of God. From that moment religion would appear a chaos, and despair inseparably interwoven with the destinies of mankind. How could we come to this falsehood? It is not because numbers held it, it is not because our fathers maintained it; we might willingly abandon it, if it was not in God's Word. We might become Unitarians to-morrow if God's Word did not teach us the Deity of Christ. There is nothing else but reverence for *God* and reverence for his Word which

can make us maintain it. And, therefore, in deep reverence for God's Word, looking up to Him for guidance, meaning to say what He says, to maintain what He maintains, and to be what He declares, we have been led, according to this hypothesis, to the maintenance of an error fundamental in its character, and on which God must frown. There would be an eternal confusion in religion if it were not true that Jesus is "the Mighty God."

But, thanks be to God, it is plain and true, and eternity will seal it, that Jesus the Saviour was to be "*the Mighty God.*"

It is said 'that God has declared that there could be no one else God but Him, and therefore this 'Child' to be born into the world, could not be God—that He was to be man, and a man could not be God?' It is true that He was to be a man, perfect man; and His wonderful goodness is all identified with that *humiliation*. It was that very humiliation

which made Him our Saviour. But He is "Emmanuel," "God manifest in the flesh"—God assuming human nature into conjunction with the Divine.

Does any man ask "how that union can exist?" How can the soul be united with the body—an immaterial thing tied to what is material? Who can say how the spirit exists without the body? Who could pretend to limit the Almighty? No one has ever done so; and no one can ever prove that there is any contradiction in the incarnation: and nothing more is needed to establish our faith.

Would any enemy of the Deity of our Lord ask me "to explain that union?" Ask a fly to explain the planetary system first; ask a worm to point out the limits of the universe first; and it would be just as reasonable as to ask a man to explain the nature of God, or how that Godhead could unite itself with man. But just as we can understand as a fact, though we

can no further explain it, that the Infinite God could assume the human form, (as he often did assume it,) without the Divine nature being thereby limited, so may we believe that He could assume the human *mind* without the Divine nature being thereby limited.

And thus Jesus became "Emmanuel," "God manifest in the flesh;" and in that assumption of our nature into union with His own, has wrought out a redemption which without such incarnation must have been impossible.

And being thus "*the Mighty God*," Jesus has power to save. Whatever is said of *El* is said of Him: He is "the Mighty *El*." And when God said to Abraham, "I am the Almighty God," we ground upon that declaration that Jesus is "the Almighty God." He has the power to rescue us from ruin, because *He is God*—"the Mighty God."

. *Dwell for one moment on His matchless*

and beneficent power. He has had power to atone for our sins, which God incarnate alone could have done; He has had power to move away the load of guilt that would have crushed us for ever; He has had power to exchange many a rebellious heart and to make it His own; He has had power to "take away the stony heart," which no created being could have reached, and to give in its place "a heart of flesh;" He has been able to overcome the malice of Satan, seeking to destroy us, and to guard us against all the evil influences of the world; and He is able to open heaven for us, and to give us a place upon His throne, and to make us glorious as Himself for ever, because He is "*the Mighty God.*" And He is able to do for mankind at large what He has done for us; He is able to reveal the laws of the Deity throughout the whole earth; He is able to convert millions to Himself; He can pour forth His Holy Spirit among

the nations, as He does among the individuals whom He has selected from among the nations hitherto ; He is able to make the whole world bow at His feet, even the most obstinate enemies that breathe ; He is able to make the wise and the learned count it their honour to employ their faculties for Him ; he is able to make little children and ignorant persons glorify Him with the holiness of their lives, and diffuse good around them, as far as their feebleness of capacity will admit ; He is able to make monarchs and princes live in piety, and simplicity and devotedness, and obedience to His word ; He is able to raise the degraded masses of our countrymen, whom no charity seems able to reach, and make them the sons and daughters of God ; He is able to make the most backward nations of the earth on a level with the most refined ; and He is able *to change every nation and institution of the world, until this earth rejoices as*

a garden full of flowers, which the Lord hath blessed, and glorifies that great Creator whom for so many ages it has dishonoured or overlooked.

Yes, Jesus is "*the Mighty God*," and all that has been predicted of Him shall receive a mighty accomplishment; for He—the loveliest of all characters, as well as the most powerful of all monarchs—has said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

On this Saviour, then, let us depend; this Saviour let us adore; and let us bless God that He has given us such a Saviour. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Let us feel the goodness of God as it deserves. There is no gift like this. If He had endowed us with all the gifts of nature and of fortune—if He had made our way the most prosperous on the earth—if He would still, to the last moment, up-

hold and bless us,—all these gifts of His goodness would not bear one moment's comparison with this His greatest and best act of goodness. "Herein is love," that He has given us Christ—Him of whom it could be said, that He was "*the Mighty God.*"

Then, as Jesus has thus come to our earth, "Emmanuel, God with us," oh! let us adore the riches of His grace who sunk so low, and rendered it possible that His enemies should thus reason against His authority and His power, because He chose to come down to the very verge of our miserable state, in order that He might rescue us from it. "Unto Him that loved, and washed us from our sins in His blood, to Him be glory for ever and ever." "We shall see Him," one day, "as He is:" we shall then be happy beyond all thought, and good beyond *all stain and danger*; then we shall know *what it was* for "*the Mighty God*" to

come down to such an abject condition for our welfare, and to suffer the accursed death of the cross, that we might not perish.

And, lastly, let us trust Him. The language of His Word, with reference to the Church of God universally, in all ages, is this: "They shall say, Behold, God is my salvation"—"Behold, *El* is my salvation." Jesus is "the Mighty *El*;" and, therefore, this is He who is our salvation. Jesus has died in order that we might live, and has become the salvation of our souls; and on Him our whole hope rests. If Christ befriend us, there is no power in the universe that can do us hurt. His death has merited our pardon; His grace can renew our souls; His fidelity can keep us from every danger; His love can place us in glory, and make us happy and blessed like Himself. Now it is our part to trust in His person and work, in steadfast and *simple faith*. Oh! let us trust in nothing else.

Trust not one solitary hope on what we have done, or on what we have been. Rest not on the work of the Spirit within us, but trust in the work of Christ without us. Trust upon what He has done to save our souls for ever. Use that one plea daily, in our prayers before God, as we shall certainly use no other, when we stand before Him at last. Everything else will then seem weak and worthless as the web of the spider ; everything else will seem utterly unable to resist the artillery of Divine wrath ; the merit of Christ is the only refuge which will enable us to endure the tempest of wrath which shall destroy the ungodly. Oh ! let us plead that merit now, as we assuredly shall plead it before the judgment-seat hereafter ; and when we think of this blessed and glorious truth, that Jesus is the "*Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God,*" then let us learn from it *that our hope must be exclusively on Him, now and for evermore.*

MESSIAH, THE EVERLASTING FATHER.

“ HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED THE EVERLASTING
FATHER.”

It was promised in this passage to the church of God, ages before our Redeemer came, that the Messiah who should be born into the world should be the universal King, and that as King He would be “ WONDERS-
FUL, COUNSELLER, THE MIGHTY GOD ;”—
astonishing in His nature, in His attributes, and in His works—the instructor of mankind, who possessing almighty power as “ THE MIGHTY GOD,” would not only be a wise, but a potent Sovereign. And it is further stated, that this Messiah should be “ *THE EVERLASTING FATHER.*”

As this is a term of the highest possible

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dignity, it would certainly not escape the animadversions of those who are unbelievers. One version of this passage is—"His name shall be called the Father of the age to come"—of which it is enough to say, that it is simply a perversion, the phrase being "The Father of eternity." The word employed in the original strictly conveys the idea of eternity—not of the "age to come"—as we may see by referring to the fifty-second chapter of Isaiah, where the same word is thus employed: "Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity:" that is, the self-existent and eternal. So that if God inhabit eternity, the same eternity which God Almighty inhabits is the eternity of which in this passage the Messiah is said to be the Father: "The Father of eternity." Another word is employed to express "age" or "the age to come;" and the word used in our text never has any *reference whatsoever* to age. The translation of Bishop Lowth—"the Father of the

everlasting age"—is less objectionable. It does not traduce the idea of eternity; but it still has the objection, that it introduces the idea of "the age," which is not contained in the word. The word means simply—"the Father of eternity;" and this expression is capable of three meanings, which have been severally given to it by different authors.

"The Father of eternity" may mean the possessor of eternity, answering to that expression in the New Testament respecting God: "Who alone hath immortality." And various Hebrew names are said to have this peculiarity, that the person is termed the Father of anything, who possesses it. Thus "the father of glory" is a Hebrew name, signifying the glorious; "the father of goodness" is a Hebrew name, implying that the person to whom it belongs is good; "the father of peace" is a Hebrew name, *implying that the person possessing it is peaceable.*

But although this is alleged, and may be true, yet these Hebrew names will not certainly convey that idea; and we do not find elsewhere a similar use made of the language. If this be the true idea, that the Messiah is "the father of eternity," because the possessor of eternity, it is simply the name of God: He could be termed the Eternal, as God Almighty is the Eternal. But as it is not certain that this is the meaning, others therefore have understood it more strictly—"the source, the author of eternity," (that is, that He is the source of eternal life to His people,) which has at least this advantage, that it has more immediate reference to the office of the Messiah; and this being a prediction respecting the Messiah, we may naturally look for a sense which belongs expressly to Him.

But the use of these terms elsewhere leads us to think that there is a more extensive sense than that He is the source of eternal life. In the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis,

at the twenty-sixth verse, we read these words—"The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of thy progenitors unto the utmost bound of the hills of eternity;" properly translated "the everlasting hills." In the forty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, and seventeenth verse, we read, "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed or confounded world without end;" literally, "to the ages of eternity"—meaning the everlasting ages. Again, in the third chapter of the prophet Habakkuk, at the sixth verse, we read as follows: "He stood, and measured the earth: He beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the mountains of eternity were scattered;" properly translated, "the everlasting mountains." Now as "the hills of eternity" mean "the everlasting hills," as "the ages of eternity" mean "the everlasting ages," and as "the mountains of eternity" mean "the everlasting mountains," so, in the

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passage before us, "the Father of eternity" means "THE EVERLASTING FATHER." The translation seems to be the most exact that could be given, unless we substitute the word "eternal" for the word "everlasting;" because, as the passages referred to, and several others, manifest, the word would have not only to mean the future eternity, but the past eternity.

The passage before us, therefore, declares that Christ should be "THE EVERLASTING FATHER;" and it invites us to consider two very important truths—in what sense He is called "the Father," and what the Scripture says of His being "everlasting," or eternal. We need only examine one or two passages, with respect to each point, which these important words contain.

I. Our Lord is here termed "the Father;" and we should notice, that this is not in *reference to the Godhead*. He is not termed "*the Father,*" as though He had the name

of His Father. In the Scriptures we always find a distinction between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; so that as the Son cannot be the Spirit, so the Son cannot be the Father, nor the Father the Son or the Spirit; but there is a distinction between the Three Persons of the Godhead, though there be but one God, according to the constant language of Scripture; "Hear, O Israel; I am the Lord, and there is none else." And the language of the New Testament is the same: "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." So that although there are these distinctions in the Persons of Jehovah, yet there is but one Jehovah; and Jesus our Saviour, who is one with the Father, is not to be confounded with the Father, so that the name of the Father be given to the Son, or the name of the Son be given to the Father. Wherein they differ from one another, it is impossible for us in the smallest degree to comprehend.

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God Almighty is utterly beyond all comparison. We should have been equally in the dark respecting His existence, if there had been a revelation concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. God Almighty, an eternal self-existent Being, is utterly beyond all conceptions that we may form respecting Him.

But the name that is given to our Redeemer, in the passage before us, is in reference to man; and it is because of His relation to His own people, that He is termed the "Father." God is so termed in Scripture in reference to men, because He is their Author, their Creator. It is because He is our Creator that He is called "the Father" of His creatures;" and therefore, when Jesus, the Messiah, is termed "the Father" of His creatures, we have to examine whether it is in the same sense of *Creator*.

Now the evidence on this point is abundant in the Scriptures. In the hundred-

and-second Psalm creation is ascribed expressly to our Lord in these words: "Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands." In the tenth verse of the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, the apostle applies these words to Christ: St. John tells us, that "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." And St. Paul, in his epistle to the Colossians, says, in language which unbelief has never been able to evade—"Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature," (that is, higher than every creature;) "for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him."

Thus He is spoken of as the author of our natural life, and therefore may be termed our "*Father.*"

But as this passage is in immediate connection with His office of Messiah, the principal idea, doubtless, would be, that He the Author of our spiritual and eternal life. This is declared to come from Christ. Christians are now alive, whereas they were once dead, they are "created in Christ Jesus;" if God the Spirit has given them new birth, in virtue of which they have commenced a new existence, the Spirit of God has been sent forth by Christ for that purpose, and when He has acted on the hearts of His creatures it may be still said as it was upon the first outpouring of the Holy Ghost—"He hath shed forth that which ye do now see and hear." Our spiritual life is referred to Him, when it is said that "*He is the Author of our eternal salvation; and He is further said to be the Author of faith,*" in the epistle to

Hebrews. Thus Jesus, when He came into this world, communicated spiritual life to His followers, and may therefore be termed their "*Father*."

Frequently did He promise that He would give eternal life to His disciples, when He was upon earth. In the fifth chapter of St. John's Gospel, He said that "as the Father hath life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son to have life in Himself;" "as the Father raiseth the dead, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." So also He declared, in the sixth chapter—"This is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose none, but should raise it up again at the last day." Again, He promised in the tenth chapter—"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." *Spiritual and eternal life are both communicated by Him. And*

not to multiply these passages, the language in the twenty-first verse of the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians is very emphatic. We there read, that “since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Because spiritual and eternal life have flowed to us from Christ, just as our natural life came from our first parent Adam, so Jesus is likened to Adam, and thus it continues—“The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.” He, therefore, when He appeared on earth, could say to the astonished and indignant Jews —“Before Abraham was I am.” He was the second Adam, the Father of his redeemed people, the source of their spiritual and eternal life; and hence believers are called, in the second chapter of the epistle to the *Hebrews*, *His children*: “Behold I” (ap-

plying the figure in the Old Testament to Christ,) — “ Behold, I and the children which God hath given Me.”

In this sense, then, has the Lord Jesus Christ become “ *the Father*” of His people. As incarnate God, as Immanuel, coming into this world in our nature, to die for us, and by redemption and grace securing to us eternal life, He has become “ *the Father*” of His people. It is a goodness beyond all thought and praise, that He who was the Author of our natural life should see us in our fallen state, refusing His guidance, violating His laws, resisting His authority, and bent upon our ruin, and then become Man for us, and in a still more important sense become our “ *Father*,” the source of spiritual and eternal life to us,—giving us a new existence in Himself; and by the work of His grace fitting us for an eternal existence with Him, as though we had revered and loved Him with all our hearts, through *the whole of our days*.

II. But this idea, that Christ is “*Father*” of His people, derives fresh value and interest from the epithet which is here attached to it: “He is the everlasting Father.” He who is thus the Author of natural, spiritual, and eternal life to His people, can never die. The term perhaps looks to a past eternity, because the language of Scripture certainly ascribes eternal existence to our Lord. Before He became man He was eternally one with God. “Of old,” we read in the hundred and second Psalm—“Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands.” “Thy years are throughout all generations.” And the prophet Micah declares in his fifth chapter that He who was born in Bethlehem was nevertheless that eternal Being, “who goings forth had been of old from everlasting.” The apostle John also could say *Him*—“In the beginning was the Word and He himself could protest to the Jews

“Before Abraham was I am. And thus, having existed from all eternity, He might be said, when He united the human nature to the Divine, to be “the eternal Father.”

But again: let us notice, that this term is applicable chiefly to His work as Mediator, and it rather relates to the future eternity than to the past. I doubt not that the principal, if not the exclusive idea, is that He is “*the everlasting Father*”—the Father of His people, who will never die. And this idea is frequently insisted in the Word of God. Look at the seventy-second Psalm, which speaks of the kingdom of the Messiah. In the fifth verse we read—“They shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure; throughout all generations.” He who is to be feared lives on; and if Jesus the Messiah is to be feared throughout all generations, He must live through them all. Look again at the hundred and second Psalm: “Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the

heavens are the works of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end." And therefore could the apostle say, in the thirteenth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever"—absolutely unchangeable and everlasting; and He himself could declare to His servant John, when He favoured him with a vision of something of His glory in the Isle of Patmos—"I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore." "Christ, then, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him;" and as He is "*the Father*" of His people, He is their "*everlasting Father*," from whom they can *never be separated* by death. It is impossible

that believers should be orphans; Christ can never leave them, nor forsake them: and He has declared, with a goodness which cannot deceive us—"Because I live ye shall live also." Loving them, and caring for them as a Father does for his children, their "everlasting Father" cannot fail them nor forsake them. In all emergencies He must be their protector, and when this life is over, an eternal life like His own must be secured to those who trust Him. Jesus who is "THE MIGHTY GOD," is also "THE EVERLASTING FATHER," of His people.

And if this be the glorious truth, which the Word of God in many other passages declares to us—that he is the Author of our natural, spiritual, and eternal life, who has existed from eternity, and as Immanuel will exist to eternity, and keep those whom He has saved,—then let us see how well it *is worth our while to be decisively His servants, His subjects, His children.* If by

any pains which we can take, by any reiteration of prayer, by any absolute and unreserved confession of our faults, by any diligence in the use of means, by any exercise of trust in Him, we can but call Him our "everlasting Father"—if we can be introduced to this relationship, that He should love us and care for us, and watch over us and provide for us for ever—surely we have secured our interests, surely we have done that which throughout eternity we shall not regret to think of ; and let us be decided in the service of Christ, as He is really "THE EVERLASTING FATHER" of His people. What unreserved denial in His service, what decision in the confession of His truth, what well-founded reliance on His promise, what a plain honest confession of Him before the world, is becoming in those who can say of Him, that He is "the *mighty God*," their "everlasting Father!" *Let us take care not to lose this relationship, not to fail to attain to the comfort here and*

the bliss for ever, that is involved in being the children, or (as in many other passages He does not hesitate to call us,) the friends, the brethren, of this glorious Saviour.

And let us not pursue this blessing indecisively. Whenever there are great interests to be secured, whenever there is a struggle between great principles, whenever there is a great happiness to be attained, why, then, to trifle, and to be between two opposite parties, is unspeakably foolish and weak. In all great crises, when societies are divided into opposing parties, and there are great principles in conflict, those who are between are commonly weak, and more and more falter, and lose their influence and often their respectability. How much more, when there is a conflict between these two opposite principles of belief and disbelief—the one to secure eternal life, and the consequence of the opposite being eternal death! Oh! let *us not belong to the vast mass of mankind, who are between these two opinions. If*

we believe not that Jesus is "*the everlasting Father*"—if we credit not the Scriptures, which ascribe to Him the glories of Immanuel—if we think He is not "mighty to save"—then join his enemies, then be unbelievers, then be cold as the iceberg ; but if these things are certain, then let us not act as though they were a mere form, but give ourselves heartily to all the work and the allegiance, and secure thoroughly all the blessings and promises, and be able to call Him our Father, our Friend, our Saviour, and to look upon Him on all occasions as the God of our salvation.

If, indeed, we know that Jesus is "*the everlasting Father*," because His Word declares it and his works sustain that Word, then let us trust the Lord Jesus Christ with an unbounded and grateful confidence. On all occasions apply to Him for our *happiness*. If He has a deep insight into *our condition*, and knows all our wants, and *loves us as a father loves*, and cares for us

as a father cares, then let us trust that great Redeemer, "*the mighty God,*" also "*the everlasting Father.*" When we are weak, go to Him for strength; when we are depressed, ask Him for consolation. Listen to His words, and believe them, when He says—"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Remember, all that has been revealed of Him, has been revealed for our everlasting consolation: that while struggling with a thousand evils, with physical and with moral ills, that are innumerable about us, He has told us that happiness may be found in Him.

And if we know Him to be our "everlasting Father," then we must remember the words of the Almighty,—“A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if, then, I be a Father, where is Mine honour?” and give Him unbounded honour. The temper of His universal church, now scattered throughout all lands,

and destined in the lapse of time to fill all lands, is this—"Men shall be blessed in Him, and all nations shall call Him blessed"—that is, in affectionate admiration shall look up to Him as their best friend, and bless Him for His unbounded goodness.

If we have "tasted that the Lord is gracious," and the power of His Spirit has effected a gracious and eternal change in our characters, then we must give Him the honour that is due to His name, and knowing that we have attached our hopes for unbounded and everlasting happiness solely upon His work, we shall meet the judgment-seat without terror, though we know there is not a single work of ours that could stand the scrutiny of the heart-searching Judge. And knowing that He has prepared a mansion for us in heaven, thither let our hearts ascend. "Set your affections on things *above*, not on things which are upon the *earth*." With whatever reasonable industry *and diligence* we pass from one earthly

success to another, still let us remember that we are now only in the childhood of existence, and that there is a home in heaven prepared for us, by the free and unmerited grace of God. It should give a new charm to all earthly things, to know that we are passing through them to so glorious a rest hereafter ; we mistake the very reason for which God blesses us now, if we do not look through every earthly comfort to something richer and better and more enduring. Look to be with our "everlasting Father" for ever and ever ; look to share in His paternal love, when "the heaven and the earth have passed away with a great noise, and the elements have melted with fervent heat," and the eternal Son of God has come again in His glorious majesty, with His countless saints and angels attending in His train—when Satan has been bound for ever, and cast into the den of his eternal sorrow, *and when all that have served Satan are with him.* Then will our hearts rejoice with

unspeakable exultation, if only we have fastened our hopes on His cross. Let us do so *now*, and look forward every day to be happy with the Redeemer for ever ; be sure that He will never leave nor forsake us ; and if we are tempted ever to forget these great truths, and to cease from searching as for hid treasure into the mine of His blessed Word—if ever tempted to forsake the company of those that most love and follow Him here, and to find a baleful satisfaction in the company of the frivolous and the wicked,—then remember the glorious inheritance which we shall be putting in doubt, and which might be ours. Walk worthy of our high vocation, and live as the children of Him whose name is “ WONDROUS, COUNSELLER, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER.”

MESSIAH, THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

“ HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED THE PRINCE OF
PEACE.”

THE meaning of this expression is made plain and certain by the words which immediately follow: “Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end.” He shall be a prince; He shall establish peace on the earth.” “His name shall be called The Prince of Peace.”

But when we receive this prediction of our Lord, and reflect upon it, we are met with some apparent contradictions to it. Our Lord, when He was upon earth, declared on the contrary,—“I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword” Accordingly, He further told His disciples that they must expect to be “hated of all men,” and to be “*hated of all nations.*” He warned them,

that the feuds that should arise through His doctrine, would poison the peace of families; "the brother should deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child." He warned them, that there should be public persecution as well as private, and that they should be dragged before governors and kings for His sake, and scourged in public. We were further informed by His inspired apostle, that this persecution would not be confined to those that were avowedly the enemies of Christ. He forewarned His disciples before the canon of Scripture was closed, that there would be a community, of which we read in the seventeenth chapter of the Apocalypse, that should be "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." This woman was some "great city," answering to Babylon, the great enemy of God's *people in older times*. It was a community *which was reigning over the kings of the earth*. It was a community that was not

Pagan, for then it would have been described as a savage beast, like the persecuting heathen emperors which Daniel saw in vision, but this was a harlot community, that professed to belong to Christ, but was faithless to Christ; and therefore some fallen church of Christ would reign, a great city, over the kings of the earth; which could be none but Rome, that came in process of time so far to forget all allegiance to Christ, as to become "drunken with the blood of the saints, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." Universal war, then, rather than peace, seemed to be predicted as the result of the doctrine of Christ.

And have not facts, up to this day, answered to these predictions? Ten Imperial persecutions, extended over the most civilised parts of the world, threatened through three centuries the extermination of the church of Christ: in which every *atrocious* was committed, and the barbarous *ingenuity* of man taxed to the utmost extent

to devise new torments to make the servants of Jesus Christ suffer. And when heathenism was subdued by the power of the Gospel, and ceased to reign, it was only that this other prediction might be accomplished fearfully in the earth; so that the saints of Jesus Christ became His martyrs throughout Europe. Papal Rome succeeded to the enmity of Pagan Rome: in the vallies of Piedmont, and along the plains of France, and throughout the Low Countries, and in the time of the Reformation, in England also, as well as throughout Italy and Spain, everywhere accomplishing what Christ by His apostle had predicted, and bringing myriads and hundreds of thousands of the saints of Jesus to public martyrdom; massacring without mercy the feeblest and the strongest, young and old, and threatening the extermination of the church of Christ. *And this led to still more extensive offerings to the sanguinary dispositions of man; great and long protracted wars following*

these massacres. Witness the wars of the Hussites in Bohemia, the wars of the Huguenots in France, to mention no other civil commotions, to which the doctrine of Christ has seemed to lead. And then, when the sword was sheathed, and nation was not imbruing its hands in the blood of other nations for the sake of theology, even then the different churches of Christ raged in enmity one towards the other,—factions that have not ceased to this day, so that the governments of the world find questions of theology and ecclesiastical rivalry still mingling with the counsels of senates, and embarrassing all their decisions. Is this the peace which Christ came to produce? In what sense is He “the Prince of peace?”

These evils that have arisen from the doctrine of Christ, and which perhaps have made that doctrine occasion more bloodshed than any single cause that has afflicted mankind, do not in the least degree detract from the glory of this great Monarch, this ador-

able Saviour, who after all establishes beyond all question at once, to the minds all who believe on Him, His claim to "the Prince of peace" throughout the universe. If the servants of Jesus Christ were sent forth by Him as sheep among wolves and the wolves have torn the sheep in every land, it is not the fault of the sheep that these raging persecutions have taken place. If He has sent forth His disciples to love one another, and to love all mankind, it is not the fault of Him, nor his doctrine, nor His people, if apostates from His faith have chosen to carry His abused name upon their foreheads, and under that name persecute with a violence which would have stamped infamy even upon heathenism, those who loved Him and served Him the best on the earth. And if those who have even followed Him with honesty of purpose, have *yet been so ill instructed in His declaration, or have sinfully given way to the weakness of their tempers, so that those*

quarrelled for ages, who by His express authority ought to have been one in Him, it is not to be ascribed to His doctrine, but to their faults. And all this evil, great as it unquestionably is, and though it has fed the mirth of the infidel age after age, is transitory still, preparatory still ; and still does the strong and stedfast faith of His people carry forward their thoughts to that day, when transient evil will only end in lasting good, and when, after all impediments have been swept away, He will still reign every where, and always as "*the Prince of Peace.*"

Think only how he has laid the foundations of the peace, of which it is here said He should be the Author ; for this name "*Prince of peace,*" evidently implies that He should be the Prince causing peace, through whose government there should be universal peace. Each of the great offices *that He has come to fulfil, secures this universal peace.* As the prophet of His

church, the Counsellor of the human race, His doctrine has every where guided men into the way of peace with God, and imposed upon them the obligation of living in peace with one another. As the great High Priest of His church, His atoning sacrifice has secured *peace* with our offended God. And then, as the King of his church, who reigns by His Spirit and by His providence over all things for ever, does He communicate the peace which He has procured, and which He has commanded them to attain, to graciously ordering all events towards the ultimate and complete establishment of peace in the world. As Prophet, Priest, and King, as King because also Prophet and Priest, He can be—He is—the ever-living “Prince of peace.”

Now let us glance at the peace, which Christ is producing, and will produce in *the earth*. Every one of His disciples *must in the review*, however cursory, feel *his heart* thankfully lifted up to God for

this great blessing, and must rejoice in our Lord and King, because He is universally "the Prince of peace."

Our first great need is to have peace with God. Because we are at enmity with God, God is angry with us, and we are "by nature the children of wrath" even as the rest of mankind; and if we had been left in our lamentable condition, we should have been only alienated from God with increasing intensity for ever, while we expected throughout eternity nothing but "the wrath to come." But Christ "is our peace," God has been "in Christ reconciling the world to Himself;" so that He is angry with penitent believers no more. Christ has rendered the Divine Being just in justifying him that believeth; and "being justified by faith, we have peace with God." So that those who come to God through Christ, may feel assured "by the nature of the *work which Christ has accomplished, by*

the attributes of God which they know, and by His own certain promise, that His wrath is removed, that He has accepted them as His adopted children, and will love them for ever. And therefore Christians now have peace. The wrath is removed, and alienation gone, and we may now have perfect peace—resting simply on the work of Christ and the promise of God. Nothing is wanting but faith; so that if any Christian has not a deep, settled, and invariable view at least a perfect peace, it is to be ascribed exclusively to unbelief. There is nothing else to cause it. The work of Christ is complete; the promise of God is certain; every hell-doomed sinner is to come to eternal life, the favour and blessing of God, for nothing in himself, if he can believe the work of Christ, the promise of God, and come to Him through Christ *the mercy He promises*; and nothing *unbelief may hinder* the most complete

lasting peace to take possession of our souls. He is therefore in this sense "*the Prince of peace.*"

And that peace with God directly leads to universal peace diffused through the souls of His people. So that they are filled with "joy and peace in believing, through the power of the Holy Ghost;" so that the kingdom of God within them "is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Why should a Christian, thus pardoned and at peace with God, not have universal peace? He can look to the providence of God as ordering all events for his welfare; every thing must work together for his good; why should he not be at peace? His passions are subdued; he has no more envy and jealousy, but he is content and humble; intemperate, riotous passions, are exchanged for temperance and purity; he has no unjust aims to *secure*, no wicked objects to pursue; why *should he not be at peace?* He has been

forgiven by God; why should he not forgive all the world? And when these truths are brought to the Christian's soul by the Holy Spirit, and he reflects upon these truths as recorded in God's Word in seriousness of mind, the mind being solemnized and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, then this universal peace takes possession of his soul; and being at peace with God, he is at peace with himself, and he is at peace with all the world. He has nothing to change, nothing to alter in the Divine law—in the Divine appointments; pleased with his duty, satisfied with his prospects, thankful for the society to which he is introduced, looking forward with joy to a blessed inheritance; and therefore he is at peace.

And, as thus peace becomes the possession of each individual believer, who lays hold *of the promises* of God made to him in *Christ*, so does this blessed Redeemer "the *Prince of peace*," give peace to every Chris-

tian family. It is true, that there is war at first; the father delivered up the son to death, and the son the father; but that war is momentary; for each Christian, at the same time that he is brought to peace, is brought to gentleness and firmness, and there are no two things more calculated to restore peace in a family. Each Christian, when he receives Christ, becomes a far more amiable member of the circle in which he lives. He can now be disinterested, who was before selfish; he can now give up his will, who was before self-willed; he can now patiently bear with little slights, who was before impatient under them. He who before perhaps was unjust in his conduct to those with whom he was associated, and still more frequently inconsiderate to their feelings, has exchanged both those faults for the opposite virtues; and being meek, humble, gentle, and affectionate, therefore he at least is not *at war with his household*. And if a *Christian is placed among those who abhor*

the Gospel most, those who have the least moderation in their enmity, still we have often seen, and will often see yet, that those who are consistent disciples of Christ, by these two qualities, their firmness and their gentleness—both of which grace imparts—do very frequently secure peace even to the unconverted members of their families. For what is the use of contention with him, who is like a rock? and how can those who are fierce in their thoughts, find it in their heart to quarrel with these, who have the gentleness of a lamb? When these two dispositions are united, so that the Christian cannot be moved from duty, and yet in this has neither self-will nor passion, then does it often happen, that when this is perceived even by the irreligious members of the family in which a Christian may live, they *at last learn to esteem and respect those, whose religion they may not love.*

But when the grace of God reaches not

one member of a household, or two, but reaches heart after heart, and when the whole family become fellow-travellers towards an eternal home, then the peace of that family becomes deep and blessed indeed. When each member of it has those Christian dispositions, which both are calculated to win affection and to deserve esteem; when all are loving, and therefore all are loved; when they have the same great truths to rest upon, the same prospect to cheer them, the same Lord to serve, and for the most part the same tasks likewise to occupy their attention; united thus in those bonds which natural friendship never could equal, and all natural affection being enhanced, elevated, and confirmed by the brotherly love which the Gospel alone can produce, a Christian family becomes a circle of such peace as the world does not elsewhere manifest.

The Christian congregation is but the larger family; and if we look at the lan-

guage of the New Testament, or if we consider the character of the Gospel, we see that the Christian church must, no less than the Christian family, become the abode of deep and settled peace. And though there is some abatement to be made, from the infirmities of Christ's own followers, and there may be for the moment, or partially, such dissensions as the unavoidable infirmities of human nature will still produce, yet if we remember the example of the church at Jerusalem, on which the Holy Spirit was poured out, and which was made the very type and pattern of each church in after days, see at once, that where much grace and much light are bestowed upon a people by the Giver of all good, that people *must* be united in brotherly love; so that the apostle could say to any church, besides that at Jerusalem—"As touching *brotherly love*, ye need not that I write unto *you*; for ye yourselves are taught of God *to love one another.*" It was not the regu-

lation only that he had given, which obliged them to be mutually benevolent; but the grace that had been imparted compelled them to be so, and the members of that church at Thessalonica loved one another for the sake of Christ, as the members of each Christian church, who are under the teaching of God, and are walking in His ways, must similarly love one another.

But although the ties that bind each Christian member of a church to all other members of it, must naturally have an earlier influence than the obligations resting on each Christian to love strangers for Christ's sake; yet the language of the New Testament, and the general and universal character of the Gospel of Christ, render it certain that the relationship of churches to one another must be of the same kind, as the relationship of the different members of a church to each other. For Christians are *never commanded in the sayings, never led by the example and authority of Christ, nor*

by the nature of the case, to restrict their benevolence to the members of the same congregation. All the brethren have a title to the love of all, as far as they know each other. It is the very character of renewed minds, that they are taught of God to love one another. "We know that we have passed from death unto life," says the apostle, "because we love the brethren;" and all those who are members of Christ, in whatever church they are found, must be dear to those who know Christ, and who are aware that He has an equal love to all His disciples, and is preparing to place them all in the kingdom of His glory. If therefore divisions have taken place in the churches of Christ, and still rage unhappily to this day, there is no foundation for that schism in the Scriptures. It is true, the unavoidable infirmities of our understanding do *secure differences* of opinion; it is true, that *differences* of opinion may lead to *corresponding differences* of discipline and of

worship ; it is true, that various congregations of Christ's followers may therefore have differences both in doctrine and in discipline ; but just as the necessities of the case cause that each Christian congregation shall meet by itself, and yet there is no schism in the body of Christ because various congregations meet under different roofs and in different localities ; so, if they knew their duty to one another, would it make no difference in this matter, that those who are honestly serving the same Lord, heartily embracing the same great truths, living in obedience to the same great laws, upholding the same Gospel in the world, and looking to the same glorious home,—worship in different forms and are called by different names ; but they would be as united as those who admit the same form of discipline, but are worshipping in different congregations. It is not the theology of the Gospel which *has occasioned factions in the church of Christ*, but the evil tempers of half-in-

structed and imperfectly sanctified followers of Christ, mingling often with those that are only His followers in name; and when differences of doctrine become, as unhappily they often do, blended with pecuniary and temporary interests, then these things under the mask of religion give an acerbity to contentions between differing professing Christians, which the doctrine of Christ alone never would have occasioned. But at the same time it is apparent, that if, contrary to Christ's plain commands, contrary to the remarkable doctrine of the fourteenth chapter of the Romans, for instance, or the twelfth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, Christians have manifested, in the different churches which "hold the head" and are not apostate, such criminal factions one against the other, still the tendency of the Gospel is to make all who love the Lord Jesus Christ love one another, and therefore to make all the different *churches* which are composed of members *of Christ*, who love Him and who love one *another*, increasingly tolerate each other's

infirmities, and bear with those differences both in doctrine and discipline, which arise from the infirmity of the understanding. And lastly, when this spirit of benevolence is enthroned, as it should be, in the hearts of Christ's disciples, there is a manifest and rapid approach to uniformity in doctrine and in discipline, inasmuch as many of these discrepancies have not arisen solely from the infirmity of the understanding, but have continually in this infirm world been mingled with the temporal interests and passions of men ; and thus the differences between churches tend to their conclusion, no less than the war in families, and Christ will yet be the Prince of peace, as reigning over one universal household, of which the members are at peace with one another.

Again : each church lives in the midst of a society much larger than the church, many of whom may bear the name of Christians, or may be without that name—it matters but little—a much larger society *of those that do not take the yoke of Christ, who do not believe His Gospel, who*

do not obey His laws, or live to honour His name. These, as we have seen, have many times persecuted with intense enmity a society so exclusive, a society that appears to them so proud and domineering, as the disciples of Christ who arrogate to themselves the exclusive possession of truth, and the favour of God exclusively. But even in this society the doctrine of Jesus Christ tends to secure peace, it tends just as far as the doctrines of the Gospel prevail—further than they prevail, to the conversion of sinners, to produce such dispositions in the society where the Gospel of Christ is recognised and circulated and is loved by many, as greatly tend to the peace of that community. The Gospel of Jesus Christ commands all men to be just, and benevolent, and generous. The Gospel of Christ teaches the rich to be beneficent, and liberal, and charitable to the poor. The Gospel of Christ teaches the poor to be industrious and *thrifty*, to be careful and provident, to be *contented*, and to sympathize with rather *than envy* the superior prosperity of the *richer classes*. The Gospel of Jesus Christ

teaches rulers to avoid all oppression, and seek the greatest good of those who are under their dominion; and the Gospel of Jesus Christ compels His servants to be lovers of order, loyal to their sovereign, and to wish well to the universal prosperity of their country. And it is quite obvious that these maxims, as far as they prevail, must tend to the universal peace of any society in which they circulate. So that it appears perfectly demonstrable, that all the sources of prosperity and peace, which can be justly reasoned out even by the enemies of Christ, which can be with any sound sense imagined to secure the temporal prosperity, order, and peace of States, are found in a much higher degree in the doctrine and laws of Christ, than anywhere else; and no man who loves his country, or who wishes to see his countrymen happy, from the prince on the throne to the lowest peasant, could take a straighter and more certain road to accomplish that *universal peace*, than by heartily embracing and diligently promulgating the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*.

And since this is the tendency in each great society, in each nation in which the churches of Christ are scattered here and there, and the children of God are "strangers scattered abroad," as the apostle calls them, so the manifest progress of the Gospel is to secure a general peace to the disciples of Christ, to the churches of Christ, in the midst of this evil world. They have been hated, maligned, and dishonoured, persecuted and martyred; it has happened in many lands and through many ages; and yet the decisive tendency of the history of mankind is to secure the churches of Christ amidst the ungodly population of the earth in perfect peace. God has promised it to His people. He has said to His own church, in the fifty-fourth chapter of Isaiah — "Great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear; and from terror; for it shall *not come near thee*. Behold, they shall *surely gather together*, but not by Me; *whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake*. No weapon shall

is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn." Now we see in the course of events the progress of the fulfilment of this promise. The church of Christ has suffered grievous wrong; persecution has been the lot of the most devoted disciples of Christ many times; but not only in England and in America—two countries in which the Gospel has large circulation, and is recognised by myriads—but likewise in Roman Catholic lands, the progress of the light that the Gospel has thrown on the various institutions of society, on the laws of government, has been to secure this peace already to the churches of Christ. In Belgium and in France, for instance, at this moment, under Roman Catholic governments, where there is a Roman Catholic majority, the minority of evangelical Christians are exposed to few other vexations than those which an unbelieving majority must always have in its power to inflict upon the believing minority: but the laws protect them, the law

give them a degree of liberty, such as in the past histories of these countries they never enjoyed ; and that, by the force of those just doctrines thrown upon society, forced upon the understandings of men by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And what we see there, we can likewise see to be the tendency elsewhere too ; leading us to the conclusion, that this prediction of the universal peace of the churches of Christ from all persecutions in the world, may have its accomplishment even before long.

But Christ, our blessed Lord, does evidently by establishing peace in each bosom of His people, peace in each family of His disciples, peace in each congregation of His saints, and peace in all His churches, lead directly to the establishment of international peace throughout the world. Each Christian congregation is made up of Christian families, and is like them ; each *Christian nation will be—for there is no Christian nation yet—made up of Christian congregations, and like them ; and just as there is peace in each household of faith and peace in each church of Christ,*

which there is truth and righteousness in harmony, so when the Gospel prevails so that churches of Christ, living and faithful, active and sincere, abound throughout the land, then there are two things that must necessarily prevent that nation being a warlike nation. Its interests, its principles, and its tastes, are alike irreconcilably opposed to war. Wars of aggrandisement, wars of cupidity, wars even of revenge, become intolerable to Christians; and in proportion as the Gospel of Christ prevails in a land, must the wars that have desolated Europe most of them become intolerable in the retrospect, and much more odious in the imagination that they should again occur. On the other hand, if a Christian nation cannot go to war, a Christian nation can scarcely suffer war. A Christian nation, if such a nation existed, would have elements of strength such as no other nation ever had. Such a nation would be universally industrious, universally therefore healthy in mind and body, toil-strung for every active service. Such a nation must be intelligent beyond its neighbour

united so as no other nation has set us an example of union. Such a nation must love its institutions, which give it happiness; and love its sovereign by God's appointment. Such a nation must have resources, such as no other nation could have; and therefore, woe to the nation that should venture to invade its sacred precincts. It would be able to repel the world. And a nation that would not go to war, and a nation strong enough to repel war, must be the source of peace in the earth. Multiply such nations—as, thank God, they will be multiplied—and then we shall see that “nation will not lift up sword against nation, and they will learn war no more.” So that the religion of Jesus Christ, by that very truth which has brought peace to one withered heart, made one wretched sinner happy in Him, can by the universal and almighty efficacy of the same truth and the same Spirit, give peace to *all mankind*; and “all nations shall worship Him, all nations shall call Him blessed.”

But our world is a little world, and there are other intelligent creatures, doubtless

infinitely more glorious than us ; and these have looked upon the hell-doomed race of man with just indignation. They have seen us, as a race of apostates, ruining ourselves by dishonouring God ; they have seen us grasping at shadows, while we scorned the substance ; burying ourselves in what is little and earthly, while we have not even looked up to the heaven God was opening for us. They have seen us exercising the most perverted judgment upon all things around us ; calling good evil, and evil good ; and embracing misery, while we refused happiness here and hereafter. Look at that angel God sent to the camp of Sennacherib, breathing in one night death over 185,000 men, as the august minister of God ; and see the ministry of angels towards an apostate world. But towards the family of Christ, " are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them which shall be heirs of salvation ? " And when the Hierophantic angel said to *John* in the island of Patmos, that he was his brother and his fellow-servant, did he not proclaim that he was the brother and th

fellow-servant of all the human family of God? And when they mingle their Hallelujahs with the Hosannas of redeemed saints in glory, do they not teach us what the apostle meant when he said—"Ye are come," not only to the church of the first born, but "to an innumerable company of angels"—to be with them one brotherhood for ever in the service and adoration, and in the joy of God? So that the universe is brought to peace by the blood of Christ, and Jesus is "*the Prince of Peace,*" not only to the distracted nations of the world, but between the glorious orders of angels, that render Him their firm allegiance in heaven, and these miserable reptile men, that seemed only to be doomed to be crushed under the wrath of God.

And this lasts for ever; Christ is "the Prince of Peace" to the universe for ever. Let those factions that disgrace mankind, that enmity which has lasted, and which the *miserable infidel* predicts will last to the *end, making men as savage beasts to one another, and banishing the memory that men sprung from one Father, and were*

looking up to one God—let that be conquered at last, extirpated from the ransomed world, and, that ransomed world transported to the kingdom of glory and bliss, there will be no more faction then—there will be no more trouble then. The peace to which Christ brings His people, His whole ransomed family, myriads unnumbered, will last throughout that eternity, which He has made so blessed to those that trust in Him.

Now let this thought be commended to deep meditation. Think of it much; and let us all ask ourselves, whether it ought not to direct, nay, indeed, to control, our whole course. Is it not worthy at once to exercise the government over our judgments and our minds? If there be this peace with the offended God; if there be the right, communicated by the blood of Christ to each penitent believer, to look up to the infinite Governor of all, and say, "Thou art my Father, and I Thine adopted child;" oh! who will have the corrupt hardihood, the unspeakable folly of repelling this august relationship? Y

may have peace through Christ; God would give you peace at once, if you had faith in Christ; why repel it? Why court trouble? Why embrace misery? Why fasten it like a chain upon your soul, heavy though it clanks not, to load your burdened spirit wherever you go, and still gather new links, till the insupportable weight brings you down beneath the grave—why, when God gives you peace? If you do but now come to Him through Christ, to save and sanctify you, to pardon you, to enlighten you, to govern you, to preserve you to His heavenly kingdom, He will do it all; and He will give you, in doing it, such a peace, that the largest estates, and the soundest health, and the best friendships, and the utmost popularity, and the consciousness of the greatest wisdom, never gave to any one, and never can give to you. Take the peace which the Gospel gives you. Be at peace. *Find peace* in Jesus Christ at once. Give up every false doctrine, give up levity and unbelief, give up all the associations that would keep you from it, and embrace the

peace which God offers to you by the meditation of His Son.

And then, as Christians, let us take care to cherish, and confirm, and complete this peace, day by day living by dependence on Divine grace; and remember that Christ has called us to an universal peace towards all around us—peace in our own souls as well as peace with God, peace in life and death, peace amidst all conceivable changes in our lives, a peace which the world cannot give, and cannot take away. Let us live as Christians, in the enjoyment of this peace, and not slight it; not let any habits that we cherish, prevent us having the cheerfulness as well as the gentleness which the Gospel gives. But be at peace in our own souls, and be at peace with one another.

But next, when we think of those prospects that Christ, Christ only, gives to our fallen world, oh! let us adore and bless that glorious King. Let us think how this peace has been won for us, for our friends, for *myriads* in our nation, for *multitudes* throughout the world, ay, and for the world

itself at last. Christ, that He might make this peace ours, bore a constant war with Himself. The whole world hated Him. Trouble after trouble rolled its heavy wave upon His soul, till He sunk in the conflict, that we might have peace. Nay, He endured that very indignation of God against our sins, which must have ruined us; and it was "the chastisement of our peace," that was upon Him. God was "pleased to bruise Him," that we might have peace. Never let us forget to adore a goodness that has no parallel, when the eternal King, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, thus became "THE PRINCE OF PEACE" by suffering the punishment of our transgressions. Never let us forget through what deep waters of trouble, through what unknown anguish of soul, Christ has passed to give us the measure of peace we enjoy now, and the prospect of such a perfect peace in the ages to come; and let us adore and bless *His name.*

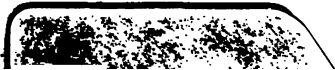
But further, if our gratitude is genuine, then let us be as servants of "the Prince of Peace." "Blessed are the peacemakers, for

they shall be called the children of God." They only are the servants of Christ. If we know Him to be our peacemaker, we must be peacemakers like Him, and move through this world, as far as in us lies, to create peace everywhere. By the dereliction of duty?—no. By the abandonment of truth?—never. Maintain truth, fulfil duty, though the whole world be at war in consequence. But be gentle as the lamb, where we are firm as the rock, that the war may not be our creating; and then strive to make all at peace by the example of Christ, by His authority and by His indwelling, constantly manifesting in our own instance the dispositions He would inculcate on mankind.

And lastly, if the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour will assuredly spread this peace throughout the world, then what other prayer should be dearer to us, than this—"Thy kingdom come?" Thinking not only of the heathen world when we make *that* prayer; it is wanted here—it is wanted in our families, it is wanted in our city, it is wanted in our own hearts. "Thy kingdom

come." That Jesus Christ may reign, the Lord of every thought, every opinion, every faculty, every habit; and that all those blessed results, which come from His dominion, may be seen amidst the millions of mankind, reclaimed by His grace, and blessed by His care. "Thy kingdom come." Let it be the honest, heartfelt prayer we every day reiterate. And may He answer that prayer, and His Spirit steadily accomplish it; and this sin-ruined world glory in its Redeemer, and give Him glory in return!

THE END.



the 1990s, the number of people who have been employed in the public sector has increased in all countries.

There are a number of reasons for this. First, the public sector has become a more important part of the economy. In many countries, the public sector now accounts for a significant portion of the total economy. Second, the public sector has become a more attractive place to work. This is due to a number of factors, including the fact that the public sector is often seen as a more stable and secure place to work. Third, the public sector has become a more important part of the social safety net. This is due to the fact that the public sector is often responsible for providing social services, such as education and health care.

There are a number of challenges facing the public sector in the 21st century. One of the most important challenges is the need to improve the efficiency of the public sector. This is due to the fact that the public sector is often seen as a major drain on the economy. Another important challenge is the need to improve the quality of public services. This is due to the fact that the public sector is often seen as a major provider of social services. Finally, the public sector is facing a number of other challenges, including the need to address the growing demand for social services and the need to address the growing inequality in the economy.

There are a number of ways to address these challenges. One way is to improve the efficiency of the public sector. This can be done by a number of ways, including the use of performance-based contracts and the use of private-public partnerships. Another way is to improve the quality of public services. This can be done by a number of ways, including the use of quality management systems and the use of customer feedback. Finally, the public sector can address the growing demand for social services and the growing inequality in the economy by a number of ways, including the use of targeted social programs and the use of progressive taxation.

There are a number of lessons that can be learned from the experience of other countries. One lesson is that the public sector can be a major driver of economic growth. This is due to the fact that the public sector is often responsible for providing the infrastructure and the social services that are necessary for economic growth. Another lesson is that the public sector can be a major provider of social services. This is due to the fact that the public sector is often responsible for providing social services, such as education and health care. Finally, the public sector can be a major provider of social services and a major driver of economic growth.

There are a number of ways to improve the public sector. One way is to improve the efficiency of the public sector. This can be done by a number of ways, including the use of performance-based contracts and the use of private-public partnerships. Another way is to improve the quality of public services. This can be done by a number of ways, including the use of quality management systems and the use of customer feedback. Finally, the public sector can address the growing demand for social services and the growing inequality in the economy by a number of ways, including the use of targeted social programs and the use of progressive taxation.

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